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Mansie and his Wife with Lantern:

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THE LIFE
OF
MANSIE WAUCH
TAILOR IN DALKEITH

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

[David Macbeth Moir]

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS BY
GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

187614
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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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TO

JOHN GALT, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF 'ANNALS OF THE PARISH,' 'THE PROVOST,'
'AYRSHIRE LEGATEES,' ETC.

THE FOLLOWING SKETCHES,

PRINCIPALLY OF HUMBLE SCOTTISH CHARACTER,

ARE DEDICATED

BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND AND ADMIRER,

THE EDITOR.



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PRELIMINARIES.

HAVING, within myself, made observation of late years that all notable characters, whatsoever line of life they may have pursued, and to whatever business they might belong, have made a trade of committing to paper all the surprising occurrences and remarkable events that chanced to happen to them in the course of Providence, during their journey through life—that such as come after them might take warning and be benefited—I have found it incumbent on me, following a right example, to do the same thing; and have set down, in black and white, a good few uncos, that I should reckon will not soon be forgotten, provided they make as deep an impression on the world as they have done on me. To this decision I have been urged by the elbowing on of not a few judicious friends; among whom I would particularly remark James Batter, who has been most earnest in his request, and than whom a truer judge on anything connected with book-lear, or a better neighbour, does not breathe the breath of life: both of which positions will, I doubt not, appear as clear as daylight to the reader in the course of the work: to say nothing

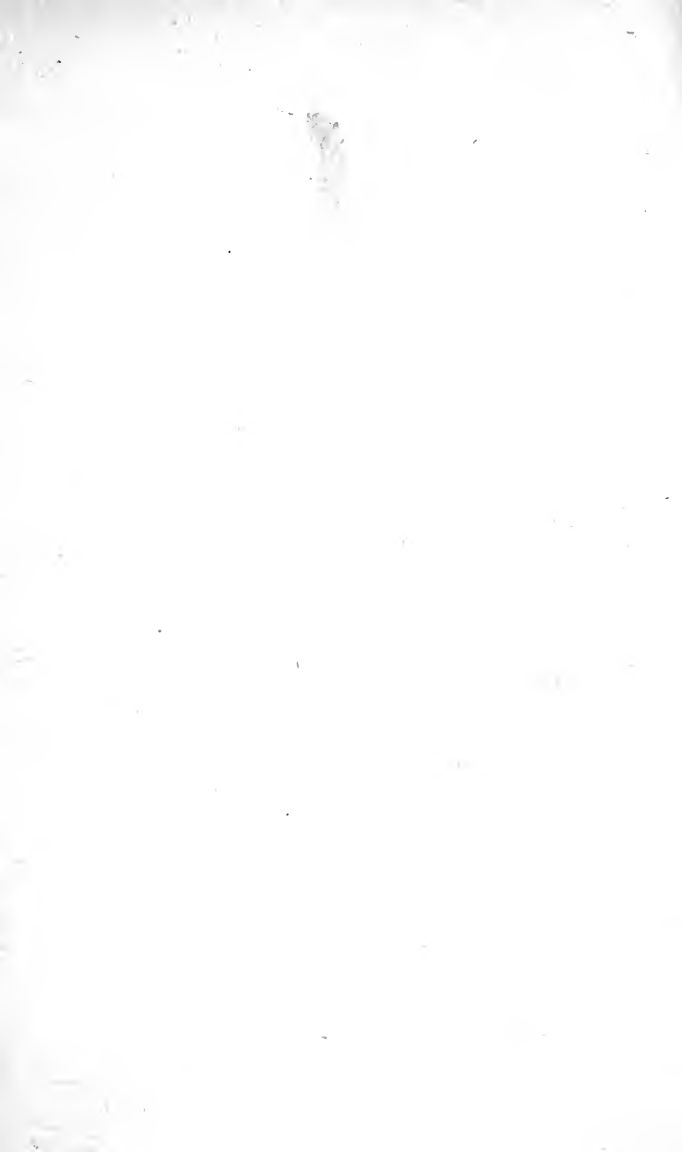
of the approval the scheme met with from the pious Maister Wiggie, who has now gone to his account, and divers other advisers, that wished either the general good of the world, or studied their own particular profit.

Had the course of my pilgrimage lain just on the beaten track, I would not—at least I think so—have been o'ercome by any perswasions to do what I have done; but as will be seen, in the twinkling of half an eye, by the judicious reader, I am a man that has witnessed much, and come through a great deal, both in regard to the times wherein I have lived, and the out-o'-the-way adventures in which it has been my fortune to be engaged. Indeed, though I say it myself, who might as well be silent, I that have never stirred, in a manner so to speak, from home, have witnessed more of the world we live in, and the doings of men, than many who have sailed the salt seas from the East Indies to the West; or, in the course of nature, visited Greenland, Jamaica, or Van Diemen's Land. The cream of the matter, and to which we would solicit the attention of old and young, rich and poor, is just this, that, unless unco doure indeed to learn, the inexperienced may gleam from my pages sundry grand lessons concerning what they have a chance to expect in the course of an active life; and the unsteady may take a hint concerning what it is possible for one of a clear head and a stout heart to go through with.

Notwithstanding, however, these plain and evident conclusions, even after writing the whole out, I thought I felt a kind of a qualm of conscience about submitting an account of my actions and transactions to the world

during my lifetime ; and I had almost determined, for decency's sake, not to let the papers be printed till after I had been gathered to my fathers ; but I took into consideration the duty that one man owes to another, and that my keeping back, and withholding these curious documents, would be in a great measure hindering the improvement of society, so far as I was myself personally concerned. Now this is a business which James Batter agrees with me in thinking is carried on, furthered, and brought about, by every one furnishing his share of experience to the general stock. Let-a-be this plain truth, another point of argument for my bringing out my bit book at the present time is, that I am here to the fore bodily, with the use of my seven senses, to give day and date to all such as venture to put on the misbelieving front of Sadducees, with regard to any of the accidents, mischances, marvellous escapes, and extraordinary businesses therein related ; and to show them, as plain as the bool of a pint stoup, that each and everything set down by me within its boards is just as true as that a blind man needs not spectacles, or that my name is Mansie Wauch.

Perhaps, as a person willing and anxious to give every man his due, it is necessary for me explicitly to mention that, in the course of this book, I am indebted to my friend James Batter for his able help in assisting me to spell the kittle words, and in ruminaging out scraps of poem-books for headpieces to my different chapters.



L I F E

OF

M A N S I E W A U C H .

CHAPTER I.

OUR OLD GRANFATHER.

“The sun rises bright in France,
And fair sets he;
But he has tint the blithe blink he had
In my ain countree.”—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

SOME of the rich houses and great folk pretend to have histories of the auncientness of their families, which they can count back on their fingers almost to the days of Noah's ark, and King Fergus the First; but whatever may spunk out after on this point, I am free to confess, with a safe conscience, in the meantime, that it is not in my power to come up within sight of them; having never seen or heard tell of anybody in our connection, further back than auld gran-faither, that I mind of when a laddie; and who it behoves to have belonged by birthright to some parish or other; but where-away, gude kens. James Batter mostly blinded both his eyes, looking all last winter for one of our name in the Book of Martyrs, to make us proud of; but his search, I am free to confess, worse than failed—as the only man of the name he could find out was a Sergeant Jacob Wauch, that

lost his lug and his left arm, fighting like a Russian Turk against the godly, at the bloody battle of the Pentland Hills.

Auld granfaither died when I was a growing callant, some seven or eight years old ; yet I mind him full well ; it being a curious thing how early such matters take hold of one's memory. He was a straught, tall, old man, with a shining bell-pow, and reverend white locks hanging down about his haffets ; a Roman nose, and two cheeks blooming through the winter of his long age like roses, when, poor body, he was sand-blind with infirmity. In his latter days he was hardly able to crawl about alone ; but used to sit resting himself on the truiff seat before our door, leaning forward his head on his staff, and finding a kind of pleasure in feeling the beams of God's own sun beaking on him. A blackbird, that he had tamed, hung above his head in a whand-cage of my father's making ; and he had taken a pride in learning it to whistle two three turns of his own favourite sang, " Ower the water to Charlie."

I recollect, as well as yesterday, that, on the Sundays, he wore a braid bannet with a red worsted cherry on the top of it ; and had a single-breasted coat, square in the tails, of light Gilmerton blue, with plaited white buttons, bigger than crown-pieces. His waistcoat was low in the neck, and had flap pouches, wherein he kept his mull for rappee, and his tobacco-box. To look at him, with his rig-and-fur Shetland hose pulled up over his knees, and his big glancing buckles in his shoon, sitting at our door-cheek, clean and tidy as he was kept, was just as if one of the ancient patriarchs had been left on earth, to let succeeding survivors witness a picture of hoary and venerable eld. Poor body, many a bit Gibraltar-rock and gingerbread did he give to me, as he would pat me on the head, and prophesy I would be a great man yet ; and sing me bits of old songs about the bloody times of the Rebellion, and Prince Charlie. There was nothing that I liked so well as to hear him set a-going with his auld-warld stories and lilts ; though my mother used sometimes to say, " Wheesht, granfaither, ye ken it's no canny to let out a word of thae things ; let byganes be byganes, and forgotten." He never liked to give trouble, so a rebuke of this kind would put a tether to his tongue for a wee ; but, when we were left by ourselves, I used aye to egg

him on to tell me what he had come through in his far-away travels beyond the broad seas ; and of the famous battles he had seen and shed his precious blood in ;—for his pinkie was hacked off by a dragoon of Cornel Gardiner's, down by at Prestonpans, and he had caught a bullet with his ankle over in the north at Culloden. So it was no wonder that he liked to crack about these times, though they had brought him muckle and no little mischief, having obliged him to skulk like another Cain among the Highland hills and heather, for many a long month and day, homeless and hungry. Not dauring to be seen in his own country, where his head would have been chacked off like a sybo, he took leg-bail in a ship over the sea, among the Dutch folk ; where he followed out his lawful trade of a cooper, making girrs for the herring barrels and so on ; and sending, when he could find time and opportunity, such savings from his wages as he could afford, for the maintenance of his wife and small family of three helpless weans, that he had been obligated to leave, dowie and destitute, at their native home of pleasant Dalkeith.

At long and last, when the breeze had blown over, and the feverish pulse of the country began to grow calm and cool, auld granfaither took a longing to see his native land ; and though not free of jeopardy from king's cutters on the sea, and from spies on shore, he risked his neck over in a sloop from Rotterdam to Aberlady, that came across with a valuable cargo of smuggled gin. When granfaither had been obliged to take the wings of flight for the preservation of his life and liberty, my father was a wean at grannie's breast : so, by her fending—for she was a canny industrious body, and kept a bit shop, in the which she sold oatmeal and red herrings, needles and prins, potatoes and tape, and cabbage, and what not—he had grown a strapping laddie of eleven or twelve, helping his two sisters, one of whom perished of the measles in the dear year, to go errands, chap sand, carry water, and keep the housie clean. I have heard him say, when auld granfaither came to their door at the dead of night, tirling, like a thief of darkness, at the window-brod to get in, that he was so altered in his voice and lingo that no living soul kenned him, not even the wife of his bosom ; so he had to put grannie in mind of things that had

happened between them, before she would allow my father to lift the sneck or draw the bar. Many and many a year, for gude kens how long after, I have heard tell, that his speech was so Dutchified as to be scarcely kenspeckle to a Scotch European; but Nature is powerful, and, in the course of time, he came in the upshot to gather his words together like a Christian.

Of my auntie Bell, that, as I have just said, died of the measles in the dear year, at the age of fourteen, I have no story to tell but one, and that a short one, though not without a sprinkling of interest.

Among her other ways of doing, grannie kept a cow, and sold the milk round about to the neighbours in a pitcher, whiles carried by my father, and whiles by my aunties, at the ransom of a halfpenny the mutchkin. Well, ye observe, that the cow ran yeild, and it was as plain as pease that she was with calf:—Geordie Drouth, the horse-doctor, could have made solemn affidavit on that head. So they waited on, and better waited on for the prowie's calving, keeping it upon draff and oat-strae in the byre; till one morning everything seemed in a fair way, and my auntie Bell was set out to keep watch and ward.

Some of her companions, howsoever, chancing to come by, took her out to the back of the house to have a game at the pallall; and, in the interim, Donald Bogie, the tinkler from Yetholm, came and left his little jackass in the byre, while he was selling about his crockery of cups and saucers, and brown plates, on the old one, through the town, in two creels.

In the middle of auntie Bell's game, she heard an unco noise in the byre; and, knowing that she had neglected her charge, she ran round the gable, and opened the door in a great hurry; when, seeing the beastie, she pulled it to again, and fleeing, half out of breath, into the kitchen, cried—"Come away, come away, mother, as fast as ye can. Eh, lyst, the cow's cauffed,—and it's a cuddie!"

CHAPTER II.

MY OWN FATHER.

“ The weaver he gaed up the stair,
Dancing and singing;
A bunch o’ bobbins at his back,
Rattling and ringing.”—*Old Song.*

My own father,—that is to say, auld Mansie Wauch with regard to myself, but young Mansie with reference to my grandfather,—after having run the errands, and done his best to grannie during his early years, was, at the age of thirteen, as I have heard him tell, bound a prentice to the weaver trade, which from that day and date, for better for worse, he prosecuted to the hour of his death :—I should rather have said to within a fortnight of it, for he lay for that time in the mortal fever that cut through the thread of his existence. Alas ! as Job says, “ How time flies like a weaver’s shuttle ! ”

He was a tall, thin, lowering man, blackaviced, and something in the physog like myself, though scarcely so weel-faured ; with a kind of blueness about his chin, as if his beard grew of that colour—which I scarcely think it would do—but might arise either from the dust of the blue cloth, constantly flying about the shop, taking a rest there, or from his having a custom of giving it a rub now and then with his finger and thumb, both of which were dyed of that colour, as well as his apron, from rubbing against, and handling the webs of checkit claith in the loom.

Ill would it become me, I trust a dutiful son, to say that my father was anything but a decent, industrious, hard-working man, doing everything for the good of his family, and winning the respect of all that knew the value of his worth. As to his decency, few—very few indeed—laid beneath the mools of Dalkeith kirkyard, made their beds there, leaving a better name behind them ; and as to industry, it is but little to say that he toiled the very flesh off his bones, driving the shuttle from Monday morning till Saturday night, from the rising up of the sun, even to the going down thereof ; and whiles, when opportunity led him,

or occasion required, digging and delving away at the bit kail-yard, till moon and stars were in the lift, and the dews of heaven that fell on his head were like the oil that flowed from Aaron's beard, even to the skirts of his garment. But what will ye say there? Some are born with a silver spoon in their mouths, and others with a parritch-stick. Of the latter was my father; for, with all his fechtin', he never was able much more than to keep our heads above the ocean of debt. Whatever was denied him, a kind Providence, howsoever, enabled him to do that; and so he departed this life contented, leaving to my mother and me, the two survivors, the prideful remembrance of being, respectively, she the widow, and me the son, of an honest man. Some left with twenty thousand cannot boast as much; so every one has their comforts.

Having never entered much into public life, further than attending the kirk twice every Sabbath—and thrice when there was evening service—the days of my father glided over like the waters of a deep river that make little noise in their course; so I do not know whether to lament or to rejoice at having almost nothing to record of him. Had Buonaparte as little ill to account for, it would be well this day for him:—but, losh me! I had almost skipped over his wedding.

In the five-and-twentieth year of his age, he had fallen in love with my mother, Marion Laverock, at the christening of a neighbour's bairn, where they both happened to for-gather; little, I daresay, jealousy, at the time their eyes first met, that fate had destined them for a pair, and to be the honoured parents of me, their only bairn. Seeing my father's heart was caught as in the net of the fowler, she took every lawful means, such as adding another knot to her cockernony, putting up her hair in screw curls, and so on, to follow up her advantage; the result of all which was, that, after three months' courtship, she wrote a letter out to her friends at Loanhead, telling them of what was more than likely to happen, and giving a kind invitation to such of them as might think it worth their whiles to come in and be spectators of the ceremony.—And a prime day I am told they had of it, having, by advice of more than one, consented to make it a penny wedding; and hiring Deacon Laurie's maltbarn at five shillings, for the express purpose.

Many yet living, among whom James Batter, who was the best-man, and Duncan Imrie, the heelcutter in the Flesh-Market Close, are still above board to bear solemn testimony to the grandness of the occasion, and the uncountable numerousness of the company, with such a display of mutton-broth, swimming thick with raisins,—and roasted jiggets of lamb,—to say nothing of mashed turnips and champed potatoes,—as had not been seen in the wide parish of Dalkeith in the memory of man. It was not only my father's bridal day, but it brought many a lad and lass together by way of partners at foursome reels and Hieland jigs, whose courtship did not end in smoke, couple above couple dating the day of their happiness from that famous forgathering. There were no less than three fiddlers, two of them blind with the small-pox, and one naturally; and a piper with his drone and chanter, playing as many pibrochs as would have deaved a mill-happer,—all skirling, scraping, and bumming away throughither, the whole afternoon and night, and keeping half the countryside dancing, capering, and cutting, in strathspey step and quick time, as if they were without a weary, or had not a bone in their bodies. In the days of darkness, the whole concern would have been imputed to magic and glamour; and douce folk, finding how they were transgressing over their usual bounds, would have looked about them for the wooden pin that auld Michael Scott the warlock drave in behind the door, leaving the family to dance themselves to death at their leisure.

Had the business ended in dancing, so far well, for a sound sleep would have brought a blithe wakening, and all be tight and right again; but, alas and alackaday! the violent heat and fume of foment they were all thrown into, caused the emptying of so many ale-tankers, and the swallowing of so muckle toddy, by way of cooling and refreshing the company, that they all got as fou as the Baltic; and many ploys, that shall be nameless, were the result of a sober ceremony, whereby two douce and decent people, Mansie Wauch, my honoured father, and Marion Laverock, my respected mother, were linked thegither, for better for worse, in the lawful bonds of honest wedlock.

It seems as if Providence, reserving everything famous and remarkable for me, allowed little or nothing of consequence

to happen to my father, who had few cruiks in his lot ; at least I never learned, either from him or any other body, of any adventures likely seriously to interest the world at large. I have heard tell, indeed, that he once got a terrible fright by taking the bounty, during the American war, from an Eirish corporal, of the name of Dochart O'Flaucherty, at Dalkeith Fair, when he was at his prenticeship : he, not being accustomed to malt-liquor, having got founish and frisky—which was not his natural disposition—over a half a bottle of porter. From this it will easily be seen, in the first place, that it would be with a fight that his master would get him off, by obliging the corporal to take back the trepan money ; in the second place, how long a date back it is since the Eirish began to be the death of us ; and, in conclusion, that my honoured faither got such a fleg, as to spain him effectually, for the space of ten years, from every drinkable stronger than good spring well-water. Let the unwary take caution ; and may this be a wholesome lesson to all whom it may concern.

In this family history it becomes me, as an honest man, to make passing mention of my father's sister, auntie Mysie, that married a carpenter and undertaker in the town of Jedburgh ; and who, in the course of nature and industry, came to be in a prosperous and thriving way ; indeed, so much so, as to be raised from the rank of a private head of a family ; and at last elected, by a majority of two votes over a famous cow-doctor, a member of the town council itself.

There is a good story, howsoever, connected with this business, with which I shall make myself free to wind up this somewhat fusty and fushionless chapter.

Well, ye see, some great lord,—I forget his name, but no matter,—that had made a most tremendous sum of money, either by foul or fair means, among the blacks in the East Indies, had returned, before he died, to lay his bones at home, as yellow as a Limerick glove, and as rich as Dives in the New Testament. He kept flunkies with plush small-clothes and sky-blue coats with scarlet-velvet cuffs and collars,—lived like a princie, and settled, as I said before, in the neighbourhood of Jedburgh.

The body, though as brown as a toad's back, was as prideful and full of power as old King Nebuchadneisher ; and

how to exhibit all his purple and fine linen, he aye thought and better thought, till at last the happy determination came over his mind like a flash of lightning, to invite the bailies, deacons, and town council, all in a body, to come and dine with him.

Save us ! what a brushing of coats, such a switching of stoury trowsers, and bleaching of white cotton stockings, as took place before the catastrophe of the feast, never before happened since Jeddart was a burgh. Some of them that were forward and geyan bold in the spirit, crowed aloud for joy, at being able to boast that they had received an invitation letter to dine with a great lord ; while others as proud as peacocks of the honour, yet not very sure as to their being up to the trade of behaving themselves at the tables of the great, were mostly dung stupid with not knowing what to think. A council meeting or two was held in the gloamings, to take such a serious business into consideration ; some expressing their fears and inward down-sinking, while others cheered them up with a fillip of pleasant consolation. Scarcely a word of the matter for which they were summoned together by the town-officer—and which was about the mending of the old bell-rope—was discussed by any of them. So after a sowd of toddy was swallowed, with the hopes of making them brave men, and good soldiers of the magistracy, they all plucked up a proud spirit, and do or die, determined to march in a body up to the gate, and forward to the table of his lordship.

My uncle, who had been one of the ringleaders of the chicken-hearted, crap away up among the rest, with his new blue coat on, shining fresh from the ironing of the goose, but keeping well among the thick, to be as little kenspeckle as possible ; for all the folk of the town were at their doors and windows to witness the great occasion of the town council going away up like gentlemen of rank to take their dinner with his lordship. That it was a terrible trial to all cannot be for a moment denied ; yet some of them behaved themselves decently ; and, if we confess that others trembled in the knees, as if they were marching to a field of battle, it was all in the course of human nature.

Yet ye would wonder how they came on by degrees ; and, to cut a long tale short, at length found themselves in a

great big room, like a palace in a fairy tale, full of grand pictures with gold frames, and looking-glasses like the side of a house, where they could see down to their very shoes. For a while they were like men in a dream, perfectly dazzled and dumfounded; and it was five minutes before they could either see a seat, or think of sitting down. With the reflection of the looking-glasses, one of the bailies was so possessed within himself, that he tried to chair himself where chair was none, and landed, not very softly, on the carpet; while another of the deacons, a fat and dumpy man, as he was trying to make a bow, and throw out his leg behind him, stramped on a favourite Newfoundland dog's tail, that, wakening out of its slumbers with a yell that made the roof ring, played drive against my uncle, who was standing abaft, and wheeled him like a butterfly, side foremost, against a table with a heap of flowers on it, where, in trying to keep himself, he drove his head, like a battering-ram, through a looking-glass, and bleached back on his hands and feet on the carpet.

Seeing what had happened, they were all frightened; but his lordship, after laughing heartily, was politer, and knew better about manners than all that; so, bidding the flunkies hurry away with the fragments of the china jugs and jars, they found themselves, sweating with terror and vexation, ranged along silk settees, cracking about the weather and other wonderfals.

Such a dinner! the fume of it went round about their hearts like myrrh and frankincense. The landlord took the head of the table, the bailies the right and left of him; the deacons and councillors were ranged along the sides, like files of soldiers; and the chaplain at the foot said grace. It is entirely out of the power of man to set down on paper all that they got to eat and drink; and such was the effect of French cookery, that they did not know fish from flesh. Howsoever, for all that, they laid their lugs in everything that lay before them, and what they could not eat with forks they supped with spoons; so it was all to one purpose.

When the dishes were removing, each had a large blue glass bowl full of water, and a clean calendered damask towel, put down by a smart flunkie before him; and many of them that had not helped themselves well to the wine,

while they were eating their steaks and French frigassees, were now vexed to death on that score, imagining that nothing remained for them but to dight their nebs and flee up.

Ignorant folk should not judge rashly, and the worthy town council were here in error; for their surmises, however feasible, did the landlord wrong. In a minute they had fresh wine decanters ranged down before them, filled with liquors of all variety of colours, red, green, and blue; and the table was covered with dishes full of jargonelles and pippins, raisins and almonds, shell-walnuts and plumdamases, with nut-crackers, and everything else they could think of eating; so that, after drinking "The King, and long life to him," and "The constitution of the country at home and abroad," and "Success to trade," and "A good harvest," and "May ne'er waur be among us," and "Botheration to the French," and "Corny toes and short shoes to the foes of old Scotland," and so on, their tongues began at length not to be so tacked; and the weight of their own dignity, that had taken flight before his lordship, came back and rested on their shoulders.

In the course of the evening, his lordship whispered to one of the flunkies to bring in some things—they could not hear what—as the company might like them. The wise ones thought within themselves that the best aye comes hindmost; so in brushed a powdered valet, with three dishes on his arm of twisted black things, just like sticks of Gibraltar-rock, but different in the colour.

Bailie Bowie helped himself to a jargonelle, and Deacon Purves to a wheen raisins; and my uncle, to show that he was not frightened, and knew what he was about, helped himself to one of the long black things, which, without much ceremony, he shoved into his mouth and began to. Two or three more, seeing that my uncle was up to trap, followed his example, and chewed away like nine-year-olds.

Instead of the curious-looking black thing being sweet as honey—for so they expected—they soon found they had caught a Tartar; for it had a confounded bitter tobacco-taste. Manners, however, forbade them laying it down again, more especially as his lordship, like a man dumfounded, was aye keeping his eye on them. So away they

chewed, and better chewed, and whammelled them round in their mouths, first in one cheek, and then in the other, taking now and then a mouthful of drink to wash the trash down, then chewing away again, and syne another whammel from one cheek to the other, and syne another mouthful, while the whole time their eyes were staring in their heads like mad, and the faces they made may be imagined, but cannot be described. His lordship gave his eyes a rub, and thought he was dreaming; but no—there they were bodily, chewing, and whammelling, and making faces; so no wonder that, in keeping in his laugh, he sprung a button from his waistcoat, and was like to drop down from his chair, through the floor, in an ecstasy of astonishment, seeing they were all growing sea-sick, and pale as stucco images.

Frightened out of his wits at last that he would be the death of the whole council, and that more of them would poison themselves, he took up one of the segars—every one knows segars now, for they are fashionable among the very sweeps—which he lighted at the candle, and commenced puffing like a tobacco-pipe.

My uncle and the rest, if they were ill before, were worse now; so when they got to the open air, instead of growing better, they grew sicker and sicker, till they were waggling from side to side like ships in a storm; and, not knowing whether their heels or heads were uppermost, went spinning round about like pieries.

“A little spark may make muckle wark.” It is perfectly wonderful what great events spring out of trifles, or what seem to common eyes but trifles. I do not allude to the nine days’ deadly sickness, that was the legacy of every one that ate his segar, but to the awful truth, that, at the next election of councillors, my poor uncle Jamie was completely blackballed—a general spite having been taken to him in the town-hall, on account of having led the magistracy wrong, by doing what he ought to have let alone, thereby making himself and the rest a topic of amusement to the world at large, for many and many a month.

Others, to be sure, it becomes me to make mention, have another version of the story, and impute the cause of his having been turned out to the implacable wrath of old Bailie Bogie, whose best black coat, square in the tails, that

he had worn only on the Sundays for nine years, was totally spoiled, on their way home in the dark from his lordship's, by a tremendous blash, that my unfortunate uncle happened, in the course of nature, to let flee in the frenzy of a deadly upthrowing.

CHAPTER III.

COMING INTO THE WORLD.

“————— At first the babe
Was sickly; and a smile was seen to pass
Across the midwife's cheek, when, holding up
The feeble wretch, she to the father said,
'A fine man-child!' What else could they expect?
The father being, as I said before,
A weaver.”—Hogg's *Poetic Mirror*.

I have no distinct recollection of the thing myself, yet there is every reason to believe that I was born on the 15th of October 1765, in that little house standing by itself, not many yards from the eastmost side of the Flesh-Market Gate, Dalkeith. My eyes opened on the light about two o'clock in a dark and rainy morning. Long was it spoken about that something great and mysterious would happen on that dreary night; as the cat, after washing her face, went mewling about, with her tail sweeping behind her like a ramrod; and a corbie, from the Duke's woods, tumbled down Jamie Elder's lum, when he had set the little still agoing—giving them a terrible fright, as they all took it first for the devil, and then for an exciseman—and fell with a great cloud of soot, and a loud skraigh, into the empty kail-pot.

The first thing that I have any clear memory of, was my being carried out on my auntie's shoulder, with a leather cap tied under my chin, to see the Fair Race. Oh! but it was a grand sight! I have read since then the story of Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp, but this beat it all to sticks. There was a long row of tables covered with carpets of bonny patterns, heaped from one end to the other with shoes of every kind and size, some with polished soles, and some glittering with sparribles and cuddy-heels; and little

red worsted boots for bairns, with blue and white edgings, hanging like strings of flowers up the posts at each end ;—and then what a collection of luggies ! the whole meal in the market-sacks on a Thursday did not seem able to fill them ;—and horn-spoons, green and black freckled, with shanks clear as amber,—and timber caups,—and ivory egg-cups of every pattern. Have a care of us ! all the eggs in Smeaton dairy might have found resting-places for their douns in a row. As for the gingerbread, I shall not attempt a description. Sixpenny and shilling cakes, in paper, tied with skinie ; and roundabouts, and snaps, brown and white quality, and parliaments, on stands covered with calendered linen, clean from the fold. To pass it was just impossible ; it set my teeth a-watering, and I skirled like mad, until I had a gilded lady thrust into my little nieve ; the which, after admiring for a minute, I applied my teeth to, and of the head I made no bones ; so that in less than no time she had vanished, petticoats and all, no trace of her being to the fore, save and except long treacly daubs, extending east and west from ear to ear, and north and south from cape neb of the nose to the extremity of beardy-land.

But what, of all things, attracted my attention on that memorable day, was the show of cows, sheep, and horses, mooing, baaing, and neighing ; and the race—that was best ! Od, what a sight !—we were jammed in the crowd of old wives, with their toys and shining ribands ; and carter lads, with their blue bonnets ; and young wenches, carrying home their fairings in napkins, as muckle as would hold their teeth going for a month ;—there scarcely could be much for love, when there was so much for the stomach ;—and men, with wooden legs, and brass virls at the end of them, playing on the fiddle,—and a bear that roared, and danced on its hind-feet, with a muzzled mouth,—and Punch and Polly,—and puppie-shows, and more than I can tell,—when up came the horses to the starting-post. I shall never forget the bonny dresses of the riders. One had a napkin tied round his head, with the flaps fleeing at his neck ; and his coat-tails were curled up into a big hump behind ; it was so tight buttoned ye would not think he could have breathed. His corduroy trowsers (suchlike as I have often since made to growing callants) were tied round his ankles with a

string; and he had a rusty spur on one shoe, which I saw a man take off to lend him. Save us! how he pulled the beast's head by the bridle, and flapped up and down on the saddle when he tried a canter! The second one had on a black velvet hunting-cap, and his coat stripped. I wonder he was not feared of cold, his shirt being like a riddle, and his nether nankeens but thin for such weather; but he was a brave lad; and sorry were the folks for him, when he fell off in taking over sharp a turn, by which old Pullen, the bell-ringer, who was holding the post, was made to coup the creels, and got a bloody nose.—And but the last was a wearyful one! He was all life, and as gleg as an eel. Up and down he went; and up and down philandered the beast on its hind-legs and its fore-legs, funkng like mad; yet though he was not above thirteen, or fourteen at most, he did not cry out for help more than five or six times, but grippit at the mane with one hand, and at the back of the saddle with the other, till daft Robie, the hostler at the stables, claught hold of the beast by the head, and off they set. The young birkie had neither hat nor shoon, but he did not spare the stick; round and round they flew like mad. Ye would have thought their eyes would have loupn out; and loudly all the crowd were hurraing, when young hatless came up foremost, standing in the stirrups, the long stick between his teeth, and his white hair fleeing behind him in the wind like streamers on a frosty night.

CHAPTER IV.

CALF-LOVE.

“Bonny lassie, will ye go, will ye go, will ye go,
Bonny lassie, will ye go to the Birks of Aberfeldy?”—BURNS.

“For a tailor is a man, a man, a man,
And a tailor is a man.”—*Popular Heroic Song.*

The long and the short is, that I was sent to school, where I learned to read and spell, making great progress in the Single and Mother's Carritch. No, what is more, few could

fickle me in the Bible, being mostly able to spell it all over, save the second of Ezra and the seventh of Nehemiah, which the Dominie himself could never read through twice in the same way, or without variations.

My father, to whom I was born, like Isaac to Abraham, in his old age, was an elder in the Relief Kirk, respected by all for his canny and douce behaviour, and, as I have observed before, a weaver to his trade. The cot and the kailyard were his own, and had been auld granfaither's; but still he had to ply the shuttle from Monday to Saturday, to keep all right and tight. The thrums were a perquisite of my own, which I niffered with the gundy-wife for Gibraltar-rock, cut-throat, gib, or bull's-eyes.

Having come into the world before my time, and being of a pale face and delicate make, Nature never could have intended me for the naval or military line, or for any robustious trade or profession whatsoever. No, no, I never liked fighting in my life; peace was aye in my thoughts. When there was any riot in the streets, I fled, and scougged myself at the chimley-lug as quickly as I dowed; and, rather than double a nieve to a schoolfellow, I pocketed many shabby epithets, got my paiks, and took the coucher's blow from laddies that could hardly reach up to my waistband.

Just after I was put to my prenticeship, having made free choice of the tailoring trade, I had a terrible stound of callove. Never shall I forget it. I was growing up, long and lank as a willow-wand. Brawns to my legs there were none, as my trowsers of other years too visibly effected to show. The long yellow hair hung down, like a flax-wig, the length of my lantern jaws, which looked, notwithstanding my yapness and stiff appetite, as if eating and they had broken up acquaintanceship. My blue jacket seemed in the sleeves to have picked a quarrel with the wrists, and had retreated to a tait below the elbows. The haunch-buttons, on the contrary, appeared to have taken a strong liking to the shoulders, a little below which they showed their tarnished brightness. At the middle of the back the tails terminated, leaving the well-worn rear of my corduroys, like a full moon seen through a dark haze. Oh, but I must have been a bonny lad!

My first flame was the minister's lassie, Jess, a buxom and

forward quean, two or three years older than myself. I used to sit looking at her in the kirk, and felt a droll confusion when our eyes met. It dirled through my heart like a dart, and I looked down at my psalm-book sheepish and blushing. Fain would I have spoken to her, but it would not do; my courage aye failed me at the pinch, though she whiles gave me a smile when she passed me. She used to go to the well every night with her two stoups, to draw water after the manner of the Israelites at gloaming; so I thought of watching to give her the two apples which I carried in my pocket for more than a week for that purpose. How she started when I stappit them into her hand, and brushed by without speaking! I stood at the bottom of the close listening, and heard her laughing till she was like to split. My heart flap-flappit in my breast like a pair of fanners. It was a moment of heavenly hope; but I saw Jamie Coom, the blacksmith, who I aye jealoused was my rival, coming down to the well. I saw her give him one of the apples; and hearing him say, with a loud guffaw, "Where is the tailor?" I took to my heels, and never stopped till I found myself on the little stool by the fireside, and the hamely sound of my mother's wheel bum-bumming in my lug, like a gentle lullaby.

Every noise I heard flustered me, but I calmed in time, though I went to my bed without my supper. When I was driving out the gaislings to the grass on the next morn, who was it my ill fate to meet but the blacksmith. "Ou, Mansie," said Jamie Coom, "are ye gaun to take me for your best-man? I hear you are to be cried in the kirk on Sunday?"

"Me!" answered I, shaking and staring.

"Yes!" said he; "Jess the minister's maid told me last night that you had been giving up your name at the manse. Ay, it's ower true—for she showed me the apples ye gied her in a present. This is a bonny story, Mansie, my man, and you only at your prenticeship yet."

Terror and despair had struck me dumb. I stood as still and as stiff as a web of buckrum. My tongue was tied, and I could not contradict him. Jamie folded his arms, and went away whistling, turning every now and then his sooty face over his shoulder, and mostly sticking his tune, as he could not keep his mouth screwed for laughing. What would I not have given to have laughed too!

There was no time to be lost : this was the Saturday. The next rising sun would shine on the Sabbath. Ah, what a case I was in ! I could mostly have drowned myself, had I not been frightened. What could I do ? My love had vanished like lightning ; but oh, I was in a terrible gliff ! Instead of gundy, I sold my thrums to Mrs Walnut for a penny, with which I bought at the counter a sheet of paper and a pen ; so that in the afternoon I wrote out a letter to the minister, telling him what I had been given to hear, and begging him, for the sake of mercy, not to believe Jess's word, as I was not able to keep a wife, and as she was a leeing gipsy.

CHAPTER V.

CURSECOWL.

“ From his red poll a redder cowl hung down ;
His jacket, if through grease we guess, was brown ;
A vigorous scamp, some forty summers old ;
Rough Shetland stockings up his thighs were roll'd ;
While at his side horn-handled steels and knives
Gleamed from his pouch, and thirsted for sheeps' lives.”

—O'DOHERTY'S *Miscellanea Classica*.

But, losh me ! I have come on too far already, before mentioning a wonderful thing that happened to me when I was only seven years old. Few things in my eventful life have made a deeper impression on me than what I am going to relate.

It was the custom, in those times, for the different schools to have cock-fighting on Fastern's E'en ; and the victor, as he was called, treated the other scholars to a football. Many a dust have I seen rise out of that business—broken shins and broken heads, sore bones and sound duckings—but this was none of these.

Our next neighbour was a flesher ; and right before the window was a large stone, on which old wives with their weans would sometimes take a rest ; so what does I, when I saw the whole hobble-shaw coming fleeing down the street,

with the kick-ba at their noses, but up I speels upon the stone (I was a wee chap with a daidley, a ruffled shirt, and leather cap edged with rabbit fur) that I might see all the fun. This one fell, and that one fell, and a third was knocked over, and a fourth got a bloody nose : and so on ; and there was such a noise and din, as would have deaved the workmen of Babel — when, lo ! and behold ! the ball played bounce mostly at my feet, and the whole mob after it. I thought I should have been dung to pieces ; so I pressed myself back with all my might, and through went my elbow into Cursecowl's kitchen. It did not stick long there. Before you could say Jack Robison, out flew the flesher in his killing-clothes ; his face was as red as fire, and he had his pouch full of bloody knives buckled to his side. I skreighed out in his face when I looked at him, but he did not stop a moment for that. With a girn that was like to rive his mouth, he twisted his nieve in the back of my hair, and off with me hanging by the cuff of the neck, like a kittling. My eyes were like to loup out of my head, but I had no breath to cry. I heard him thraw the key, for I could not look down, the skin of my face was pulled so tight ; and in he flang me like a pair of old boots into his booth, where I landed on my knees upon a raw bloody calf's skin. I thought I would have gone out of my wits, when I heard the door locked upon me, and looked round me in such an unearthly place. It had only one sparred window, and there was a garden behind, but how was I to get out ? I danced round and round about, stamping my heels on the floor, and rubbing my begritten face with my coat sleeve. To make matters worse, it was wearing to the darkening. The floor was all covered with lapped blood, and sheep and calf skins. The calves and the sheep themselves, with their cuttit throats, and glazed een, and ghastly girling faces, were hanging about on pins, heels uppermost. Losh me ! I thought on Bluebeard and his wives in the bloody chamber !

And all the time it was growing darker and darker, and more dreary ; and all was as quiet as death itself. It looked, by all the world, like a grave, and me buried alive within it ; till the rottens came out of their holes to lick the blood, and whisked about like wee evil spirits. I thought on my

father and my mother, and how I should never see them more; for I was sure that Cursecowl would come in the dark, tie my hands and feet thegither, and lay me across the killing-stool. I grew more and more frightened; and it grew more and more dark. I thought all the sheep-heads were looking at one another, and then girn-girning at me. At last I grew desperate; and my hair was as stiff as wire, though it was as wet as if I had been douking in the Esk. I began to bite through the wooden spars with my teeth, and rugged at them with my nails, till they were like to come off—but no, it would not do. At length, when I had greeted myself mostly blind, and cried till I was as hoarse as a corbie, I saw auld Janet Hogg taking in her bit washing from the bushes, and I reeled and screamed till she heard me.—It was like being transported into heaven; for, in less than no time, my mother, with her apron at her eyes, was at the door; and Cursecowl, with a candle in the front of his hat, had scarcely thrawn the key, when out I flew; and she lifted up her foot (I daresay it was the first and last time in her life, for she was a douce woman), and gave him such a kick and a push, that he played bleach over, head foremost, without being able to recover himself; and, as we ran down the close, we heard him cursing and swearing in the dark, like a devil incarnate.

CHAPTER VI.

PUSHING MY FORTUNE.

“Oh, love, love, lassie,
Love is like a dizziness;
It winna let a puir body
Gang about their business.”

—JAMES HOGG.

The days of the years of my prenticeship having glided cannily over on the working-board of my respected maister, James Hosey, where I sat sewing cross-legged like a busy bee, in the true spirit of industrious contentment, I found

myself, at the end of the seven year, so well instructed in the tailoring trade, to which I had paid a near-sighted attention, that, without more ado, I girt myself round about with a proud determination of at once cutting my mother's apron string, and venturing to go without a hold. Thinks I to myself, "faint heart never won fair lady;" so, taking my stick in my hand, I set out towards Edinburgh, as brave as a Highlander, in search of a journeyman's place. When I think how many have been out of bread, month after month, making vain application at the house of call, I may set it down to an especial Providence that I found a place, on the very first day, to my heart's content, in by at the Grass-market, where I stayed for the space of six calendar months.

Had it not been from a real sense of the duty I owed to my future employers, whomsoever they might be, in making myself a first-rate hand in the cutting, shaping, and sewing line, I would not have found courage in my breast to have helped me out through such a long and dreary time. The change from our own town, where every face was friendly, and where I could ken every man I saw, by the cut of his coat, at half a mile's distance, to the bum and bustle of the High Street, the tremendous cannons of the Castle, packed full of soldiers ready for war, and the filthy, ill-smelling abominations of the Cowgate, where I put up, was almost more than could be thoed by man of woman born. My lodging was up six pair of stairs, in a room of Widow Randie's, which I rented for half-a-crown a week, coals included; and many a time, after putting out my candle, before stepping into my bed, I used to look out at the window, where I could see thousands and thousands of lamps, spreading for miles adown streets and through squares, where I did not know a living soul; and dreeing the awful and insignificant sense of being a lonely stranger in a foreign land. Then would the memory of past days return to me; yet I had the same trust in Heaven as I had before, seeing that they were the dividual stars above my head which I used to glour up at in wonder at Dalkeith—pleasant Dalkeith! ay, how different, with its bonny river Esk, its gardens full of gooseberry bushes and pear-trees, its grass parks spotted with sheep, and its grand green woods, from the bullying blackguards, the comfortless reek, and the nasty gutters of the Netherbow.

To those, nevertheless, that take the world as they find it, there are pleasures in all situations; nor was mine, bad though I allow it to be, entirely destitute of them; for our work-room being at the top of the stairs, and the light of heaven coming down through skylights, three in number, we could, by putting out our heads, have a vizzy of the grand ancient building of George Heriot's Hospital, with the crowds of young laddies playing through the grass parks, with their bit brown coaties, and shining leather caps, like a wheen puddocks; and all the sweet country out by Barrowmuirhead, and thereaway; together with the Corstorphine Hills—and the Braid Hills—and the Pentland Hills—and all the rest of the hills, covered here and there with tufts of blooming whins, as yellow as the beaten gold—spotted round about their bottoms with green trees, and growing corn, but with tops as bare as a gaberlunzie's coat—kepping the rowling clouds on their awful shoulders on cold and misty days; and freckled over with the flowers of the purple heather, on which the shy moorfowl take a delight to fatten and fill their craps, through the cosy months of the blythe summer time.

Let nobody take it amiss, yet I must bear witness to the truth, though the devil should have me. My heart was seasick of Edinburgh folk and town manners, for the which I had no stomach. I could form no friendly acquaintanceship with a living soul; so I abode by myself, like St John in the Isle of Patmos, on spare allowance, making a sheep-head serve me for three days' kitchen. I longed like a sailor that has been far at sea, and wasted and weatherbeaten, to see once more my native home; and, bundling up, flee from the noisy stramash to the loun dykeside of domestic privacy. Everything around me seemed to smell of sin and pollution, like the garments of the Egyptians with the ten plagues; and often, after I took off my clothes to lie down in my bed, when the watchmen that guarded us through the night in blue dreadnoughts with red necks, and battons, and horn-bouets, from thieves, murderers, and pickpockets, were bawling, "Half-past ten o'clock," did I commune with my own heart, and think within myself that I would rather be a sober, poor, honest man in the country, able to clear my day and way by the help of Providence, than the Provost

himself, my lord though he be, or even the Mayor of London, with his velvet gown trailing for yards in the glaur behind him—do what he likes to keep it up; or riding about the streets—as Joey Smith the Yorkshire jockey, to whom I made a hunting-cap, told me—in a coach made of clear crystal, and wheels of the beaten gold.

It was an awful business; dog on it, I aye wonder yet how I got through with it. There was no rest for soul or body by night or day, with police-officers crying, “One o’clock, an’ a frosty morning,” knocking Eirishmen’s teeth down their throats with their battons, hauling limmers by the lug and horn into the lock-up-house, or over by to Bridewell, where they were set to beat hemp for a small wage, and got their heads shaved; with carters bawling, “Ye yo, yellow sand, yellow sand,” with mouths as wide as a barn-door, and voices that made the drums of your ears dirl, and ring again like mad; with fishwives from Newhaven, Cockenzie, and Fisherrow, skirling, “Roug-arug, warstling herring,” as if every one was trying to drown out her neighbour, till the very landladies, at the top of the seventeen storey houses, could hear, if they liked to be fashed, and might come down at their leisure to buy them at three for a penny; men from Barnton, and thereaway on the Queensferry Road, halloing, “Sour douk, sour douk;” tinklers skirmishing the edges of brown plates they were trying to make the old wives buy—and what not. To me it was a real hell upon earth.

Never let us repine, howsomever, but consider that all is ordered for the best. The sons of the patriarch Jacob found out their brother Joseph in a foreign land, and where they least expected it; so it was here—even here, where my heart was sickening unto death, from my daily and nightly thoughts being as bitter as gall—that I fell in with the greatest blessing of my life, Nanse Cromie!

In the flat below our workshop lived Mrs Whitteraick, the wife of Mr Whitteraick, a dealer in hens and hams in the poultry market, that had been fallen in with, when her gudeman was riding out on his bit sheltie in the Lauder direction, bargaining with the farmers for their ducks, chickens, gaislings, geese, turkey-pouts, howtowdies, guinea-hens, and other barn-door fowls; and, among his other calls,

having happened to make a transaction with her father, anent some Anchovy-ducks, he, by a warm invitation, was kindly pressed to remain for the night.

The upshot of the business was, that, on mounting his pony to make the best of his way home, next morning after breakfast, Maister Whitteraick found he was shot through the heart with a stound of love ; and that, unless a suitable remedy could be got, there was no hope for him on this side of time, let alone blowing out his brains, or standing before the minister. Right it was in him to run the risk of deciding on the last ; and so well did he play his game, that, in two months from that date, after sending sundry presents on his part to the family, of smeaked hams and salt tongues—acknowledged on theirs, by return of carrier, in the shape of sucking pigs, jargonelle pears, skim-milk cheeses, and such-like—matters were soldered ; and Miss Jeanie Learig, made into Mrs Whitteraick by the blessing of Dr Blether, rode away into Edinburgh in a post-chaise, with a brown and a black horse, one blind, and the other lame, seated cheek-by-jowl with her loving spouse, who, doubtless, was busked out in his best, with a Manchester superfine blue coat, and double gilt buttons, a waterproof hat, silk stockings, with open-steek gushats, and bright yellow shamoy gloves.

A stranger among strangers, and not knowing how she might thole the company and conversation of town-life, Mrs Whitteraick, that was to be, hired a bit wench of a lassie from the neighbourhood, that was to follow her, come the term. And who think ye should this lassie be, but Nanse Cromie — afterwards, in the course of a kind Providence, the honoured wife of my bosom, and the mother of bonny Benjie.

In going up and down the stairs—it being a common entry, ye observe—me maybe going down with my everyday hat on to my dinner, and she coming up, carrying a stoup of water, or half-a-pound of pouthered butter on a plate, with a piece paper thrown over it—we frequently met half-way, and had to stand still to let one another pass. Nothing came out of these forgatherings, howsomever, for a month or two, she being as shy and modest as she was bonny, with her clean demity short gown, and snow-white morning mutch, to say nothing of her cherry mouth, and her glanc-

ing eyes ; and me unco douffie in making up to strangers. We could not help, nevertheless, to take aye a stolen look of each other in passing ; and I was a gone man, bewitched out of my seven senses, falling from my clothes, losing my stomach, and over the lugs in love, three weeks and some odd days before ever a single syllable passed between us.

Gude kens how long this Quaker-meeting-like silence would have continued, had we not chanced to foregather one gloaming ; and I, having gotten a dram from one of our customers with a hump-back, at the Crosscausey, whose fashionable new coat I had been out fitting on, found myself as brave as a Bengal tiger, and said to her, "This is a fine day, I say, my dear Nancy."

The ice being once broken, everything went on as smoothly as ye like ; so, in the long run, we went like lightning from two-handed cracks on the stair-head, to stown walks, after work-hours, out by the West Port, and thereaway.

If ever a man loved, and loved like mad, it was me, Mansie Wauch—and I take no shame in the confession ; but, knowing it all in the course of nature, declare it openly and courageously in the face of the wide world. Let them laugh who like ; honest folk, I pity them ; such know not the pleasures of virtuous affection. It is not in corrupted, sinful hearts that the fire of true love can ever burn clear. Alas, and ohon orie ! they lose the sweetest, completest, dearest, truest pleasure that this world has in store for its children. They know not the bliss to meet, that makes the embrace of separation bitter. They never dreamed the dreams that make wakening to the morning light unpleasant. They never felt the raptures that can dirl like darts through a man's soul from a woman's eye. They never tasted the honey that dwells on a woman's lip, sweeter than yellow marygolds to the bee ; or fretted under the fever of bliss that glows through the frame in pressing the hand of a suddenly met and fluttering sweetheart. But tuts-tuts—hech-how ! my day has long since passed ; and this is stuff to drop from the lips of an auld fool. Nevertheless, forgive me, friends : I cannot help all-powerful nature.

Nanse's taste being like my own, we amused one another in abusing great cities, which are all chokeful of the abom-

inations of the Scarlet Woman ; and it is curious how soon I learned to be up to trap—I mean in an honest way ; for, when she said she was wearying the very heart out of her to be home again to Lauder, which she said was her native, and the true land of Goshen, I spoke back to her by way of answer—“ Nancy, my dear, believe me that the real land of Goshen is out at Dalkeith ; and if ye’ll take up house with me, and enter into a way of doing, I daursay in a while ye’ll come to think so too.”

What will ye say there ? Matters were by - and - by settled full tosh between us ; and, though the means of both parties were small, we were young, and able and willing to help one another. Nanse, out of her wages, had hained a trifle ; and I had, safe lodged under lock-and-key in the Bank of Scotland, against the time of my setting up, the siller which was got by selling the bit house of gran-faither’s, on the death of my ever-to-be-lamented mother, who survived her helpmate only six months, leaving me an orphan lad in a wicked world, obliged to fend, forage, and look out for myself.

Taking matters into account, therefore, and considering that it is not good for man to be alone, Nanse and me laid our heads together towards the taking a bit house in the fore-street of Dalkeith ; and at our leisure kept a look-out about buying the plenishing—the expense of which, for different littles and littles, amounted to more than we expected ; yet, to our hearts’ content, we made some most famous second-hand bargains of sprechery, amongst the old-furniture warehousemen of the Cowgate. I might put down here the prices of the room-grate, the bachelor’s oven, the cheese - toaster, and the warming - pan especially, which, though it had a wheen holes in it, kept a fine polish ; but, somehow or other, have lost the receipt, and cannot make true affidavit.

Certain it is, whatever cadgers may say to the contrary, that the back is aye made for the burden ; and, were all to use the means, and be industrious, many, that wyte bad harvests, and worse times, would have, like the miller in the auld sang, “ A penny in the purse for dinner and for supper,” or better to finish the verse, “ Gin ye please a guid fat cheese, and lumps of yellow butter.”

For two three days, I must confess, after Maister Wiggie had gone through the ceremony of tying us together, and Nanse and me found ourselves in the comfortable situation of man and wife, I was a wee dowie and desponding, thinking that we were to have a numerous small family, and where trade was to come from ; but no sooner was my sign nailed up, with four iron holdfasts, by Johnny Hammer, painted in black letters on a blue ground, with a picture of a jacket on one side, and a pair of shears on the other,—and my shop-door opened to the public, with a wheen ready-made waistcoats, gallowses, leather-caps, and Kilmarnock cowls, hung up at the window, than business flowed in upon us in a perfect torrent. First one came in for his measure, and then another. A wife came in for a pair of red worsted boots for her bairn, but would not take them for they had not blue fringes. A bareheaded lassie, hoping to be hansel, threw down twopence, and asked tape at three yards for a halfpenny. The minister sent an old black coat beneath his maid's arm, pinned up in a towl, to get docked in the tails down into a jacket ; which I trust I did to his entire satisfaction, making it fit to a hair. The Duke's butler himself patronised me, by sending me a coat which was all hair-powder and pomate, to get a new neck put to it. And James Batter, aye a staunch friend of the family, despatched a bare-foot cripple lassie down the close to me, with a brown paper parcel tied with skinie, and having a memorandum letter sewed on the top of it, and wafered with a wafer. It ran as follows : “Maister Batter has sent down, per the bearer, with his compliments to Mr Wauch, a cuttikin of corduroy, deficient in the instep, which please let out, as required. Maister Wauch will also please be so good as observe, that three of the buttons have sprung the thorls, which he will be obliged to him to replace, at his earliest convenience. Please send me a message what that may be ; and have the account made out, article for article, and duly discharged, that I may send down the bearer with the change ; and to bring me back the cuttikin and the account, to save time and trouble. I am, dear sir, your most obedient friend, and ever most sincerely,

JAMES BATTER.”

No wonder than we attracted customers, for our sign was

the prettiest ye ever saw, though the jacket was not just so neatly painted, as for some sand-blind creatures not to take it for a goose. I daresay there were fifty half-naked bairns glowring their eyes out of their heads at it, from morning till night ; and after they all were gone to their beds, both Nanse and me found ourselves so proud of our new situation in life, that we slipped out in the dark by ourselves, and had a prime look at it with a lantern.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FOREWARNING.

“ I had a dream which was not all a dream.”—BYRON.

“ Coming events cast their shadows before.”—CAMPBELL.

On first commencing business, I have freely confessed, I believe, that I was unco solicitous of custom, though less from sinful, selfish motives, than from the, I trust, laudable fear I had about becoming in a jiffy the father of a small family, every one with a mouth to fill and a back to cleid—helpless bairns, with nothing to look to or lean on, save and except the proceeds of my daily handiwork. Nothing, however, is sure in this world, as Maister Wiggie more than once took occasion to observe, when lecturing on the house built by the foolish man on the sea-sands ; for months passed on, and better passed on ; and these, added together by simple addition, amounted to three years ; and still neither word nor wittens of a family, to perpetuate our name to future generation, appeared to be forthcoming.

Between friends, I make no secret of the matter, that this was a catastrophe which vexed me not a little, for more reasons than one. In the first place, youngsters being a bond of mutual affection between man and wife, sweeter than honey from the comb, and stronger than the Roman cement with which the old Picts built their bridges, that will last till the day of doom. In the second place, bairns toddling round a bit ingle make a house look like itself,

especially in the winter time, when hailstones rattle on the window, and winds roar like the voices of mighty giants at the lum-head; for then the maister of the dwelling finds himself like an ancient patriarch, and the shepherd of a flock, tender as young lambs, yet pleasant to his eye, and dear to his heart. And in the third place (for I'll speak the truth and shame the deil), as I could not thole the gibes and idle tongues of a wheen fools, that, for their diversion, would be asking me, "How the wife and bairns were; and if I had sent my auldest laddie to the school yet?"

I have swithered within myself for more than half-an-hour, whether I should relate a circumstance bordering a little on the supernatural line, that happened to me, as connected with the business of the bairns, of which I have just been speaking; and, were it for no other reason but just to plague the scoffer that sits in his elbow-chair, I have determined to jot down the whole miraculous paraphernally in black and white. With folk that will not listen to the voice of reason, it is needless to be wasterful of words; so them that like may either prin their faith to my coat-sleeve, about what I am going to relate, or not—just as they choose. All that I can say in my defence, and as an affidavit to my veracity, is, that I have been thirty year an elder of Maister Wiggie's kirk—and that is no joke. The matter I make free to consider is not a laughing concern, nor anything belonging to the Merry-Andrew line; and, if folk were but strong in the faith, there is no saying what may come to pass for their good. One might as well hold up their brazen face, and pretend not to believe anything—neither the Witch of Endor raising up Samuel; nor Cornel Gardiner's vision; nor Johnny Wilkes and the De'il; nor Peden's prophecies.

Nanse and me aye made what they call an anniversary of our wedding-day, which happened to be the fifth of November, the very same as that on which the Gunpowder Plot chances to be occasionally held—Sundays excepted. According to custom, this being the fourth year, we collected a good few friends to a tea-drinking; and had our cracks and a glass or two of toddy. Thomas Burlings, if I mind, was there, and his wife; and Deacon Paunch, he was a bachelor;

and likewise James Batter; and David Sawdust and his wife, and their four bairns, good customers; and a wheen more, that, without telling a lie, I could not venture to particularise at this moment, though maybe I may mind them when I am not wanting—but no matter. Well, as I was saying, after they all went away, and Nanse and me, after locking the door, slipped to our bed, I had one of the most miraculous dreams recorded in the history of man; more especially if we take into consideration where, when, and to whom it happened.

At first I thought I was sitting by the fireside, where the cat and the kittling were playing with a mouse they had caught in the meal-kit, cracking with James Batter on check-reels for yarn, and the cleverest way of winding pirns, when, all at once, I thought myself transplanted back to the auld world—forgetting the tailoring trade; broad and narrow cloth; worsted boots and Kilmarnock cowl; pleasant Dalkeith; our late yearly ploy; my kith and kindred; the friends of the people; the Duke's parks; and so on—and found myself walking beneath beautiful trees, from the branches of which hung apples, and oranges, and cocky-nuts, and figs, and raisins, and plundamases, and corrydanders, and more than the tongue of man can tell, while all the birds and beasts seemed as tame as our bantings; in fact, just as they were in the days of Adam and Eve—Bengal tigers passing by on this hand, and Russian bears on that, rowing themselves on the grass, out of fun; while peacocks, and magpies, and parrots, and cockytoos, and yorlins, and grey linties, and all birds of sweet voice and fair feather, sported among the woods, as if they had nothing to do but sit and sing in the sweet sunshine, having dread neither of the net of the fowler, the double-barrelled gun of the game-keeper, nor the laddies' girth set with moolings of bread. It was real paradise; and I found myself fairly lifted off my feet and transported out of my seven senses.

While sauntering about at my leisure, with my Sunday hat on, and a pair of clean white cotton stockings, in this heavenly mood under the green trees, and beside the still waters, out of which beautiful salmon trouts were sporting and leaping, methought in a moment I fell down in a trance, as flat as a flounder, and I heard a voice visibly saying to

me, "Thou shalt have a son ; let him be christened Benjamin !" The joy that this vision brought my spirit thrilled through my bones, like the sounds of a blind man grinding "Rule Britannia" out of an organ, and my senses vanished from me into a kind of slumber, on rousing from which I thought I found myself walking, all dressed, with powdered hair, and a long tye behind, just like a grand gentleman, with a valuable bamboo walking-stick in my hand, among green yerbs and flowers, like an auncient hermit far away among the hills, at the back of beyont ;—as if broad cloth and buckram had never been heard tell of, and serge, twist, pocket-linings, and shamoy leather were matters with which mortal man had no concern.

Speak of auld-light or new-light as ye like, for my own part I am not much taken up with any of your warlock and wizard tribe ; I have no brew of your auld Major Weir, or Tam o' Shanter, or Michael Scott, or Thomas the Rhymer's kind, knocking in pins behind doors to make decent folk dance, jig, cut and shuffle themselves to death—splitting the hills as ye would spelder a haddy, and playing all manner of evil pranks, and sinful abominations, till their crafty maister, Auld Nick, puts them to their mettle, by setting them to twine ropes out of sea-sand, and such like. I like none of your paternosters, and saying of prayers backwards, or drawing lines with chalk round ye, before crying—

"Redcowl, redcowl, come if ye daur ;
Lift the sneck, and draw the bar."

I never in the whole course of my life was fond of lending the sanction of my countenance to anything that was not canny ; and, even when I was a wee smout of a callant, with my jacket and trowsers buttoned all in one, I never would play, on Halloween night, at anything else but douking for apples, burning nuts, pulling kail-runts, foul water and clean, drapping the egg, or trying who was to be your sweetheart out of the lucky bag.

As I have often thought, and sometimes taken occasion to observe, it would be well for us all to profit by experience—"burned bairns should dread the fire," as the proverb goes. After the miserable catastrophe of the playhouse, for instance—which I shall afterwards have occasion to com-

memorate in due time, and in a subsequent chapter of my eventful life—I would have been worse than mad had I persisted, night after night, to pay my shilling for a veesy of vagrants in buckram, and limmers in silk, parading away at no allowance—as kings and queens, with their tale-speaking havers that only fools have throats wide enough to swallow, and giving themselves airs to which they have no more earthly title than the man in the moon. I say nothing, besides, of their throwing glamour in honest folks' een ; but I'll not deny that I have been told by them who would not lie, and were living witnesses of the transaction, that, as true as death, they had seen the tane of these ne'er-do-weels spit the other, through and through, with a weel-sharpened, old, Highland, forty-second Andrew Ferrary, in single combat ; whereupon, as might reasonably be expected, he would, in the twinkling of a farthing rushlight, fall down as dead as a bag of sand ; yet, by their ricktum-ticktum, rise-up-Jack, sleight-of-hand, hocus-pocus way, would be on his legs, brushing the stour from his breeches knees, before the green curtain was half-way down. James Batter himself once told me that, when he was a laddie, he saw one of these clan-jamphrey go in behind the scenes with nankeen trowsers, a blue coat out at the elbows, and fair hair hanging over his ears, and in less than no time come out a real negro, as black as Robinson Crusoe's man Friday, with a jacket on his back of Macgregor tartan, and as good a pair of buckskin breeches as jockey ever mounted horse in at a Newmarket race. Where the silk stockings were wrought, and the Jerusalem sandals made, that he had on his feet, James Batter used doucely to observe he would leave every reasonable man to guess at a venture.

A good story not being the worse of being twice told, I repeat it over again, that I would have been worse than daft, after the precious warning it was my fortune to get, to have sanctioned such places with my presence, in spite of the remonstrances of my conscience—and of Maister Wiggie—and of the Kirk-session. Whenever anything is carried on out of the course of nature, especially when accompanied with dancing and singing, toot-tooting of clarionets, and bumming of bass-fiddles, ye may be as sure as you are born that ye run a chance of being deluded out of your

right senses—that the sounds are by way of lulling the soul asleep—and that, to the certainty of a without-a-doubt, you are in the heat and heart of one of the devil's rendezvooses.

To say no more, I was once myself, for example, at one of our Dalkeith fairs, present in a hay-loft—I think they charged threepence at the door, but let me in with a grudge for twopence, but no matter—to see a punch and puppie-show business, and other sleight-of-hand work. Well, the very moment I put my neb within the door, I was visibly convinced of the smell of burnt roset, with which I understand they make lightning, and knew, as well as maybe, what they had been trafficking about with their black art; but, nevertheless, having a stout heart, I determined to sit still, and see what they would make of it, knowing well enough that, as long as I had the Psalm-book in my pocket, they would be gey and clever to throw any of their blasted cantrips over me.

What do you think they did? One of them, a wauf, drucken-looking scoundrel, fired a gold ring over the window, and mostly set fire to the thatch house opposite—which was not insured. Yet where think ye did the ring go to? With my living een I saw it taken out of auld Willie Turneep's waistcoat pouch, who was sitting blind fou, with his mouth open, on one of the back seats; so by no earthly possibility could it have got there, except by whizzing round the gable, and in through the steeked door by the key-hole.

Folk may say what they chuse by way of apology, but I neither like nor understand such on-going as changing sterling silver half-crowns into copper penny-pieces, or mending a man's coat—as they did mine, after cutting a blad out of one of the tails—by the black art.

But, hout-tout, one thing and another coming across me, had almost clean made me forget explaining to the world the upshot of my extraordinary vision; but better late than never—and now for it.

Nanse, on finding herself in a certain way, was a thought dumfounded; and instead of laughing, as she did at first, when I told her my dream, she soon came to regard the matter as one of sober earnest. The very prospect of what was to happen threw a gleam of comfort round our bit fire-

side; and long ere the day had come about which was to crown our expectations, Nanse was prepared with her bit stock of baby's wearing-apparel, and all necessities appertaining thereto—wee little mutches with lace borders, and side-knots of blue three-ha'penny ribbon—long muslin frockies, vandyked across the breast, drawn round the waist with narrow nittings, and tucked five rows about the tail—Welsh flannel-petticoaties—demity wrappers—a coral gumstick, and other uncoss, which it does not befit the like of me to particularise. I trust, on my part, as far as in me lay, I was not found wanting—having taken care to provide a famous Dunlop cheese, at fivepence-halfpenny the pound—I believe I paid fifteen, in Joseph Gowdy's shop, before I fixed on it;—to say nothing of a bottle, or maybe two, of real peat-reek, Farintosh, small-still Hieland whisky—Glenlivet, I think, is the name o't—half a peck of short-bread, baken by Thomas Burlings, with three pounds of butter, and two ounces of carvie-seeds in it, let alone orange-peel, and a pennyworth of ground cinnamon—half a mutchkin of best cony brandy, by way of change—and a Musselburgh ankerstoke, to slice down for tea-drinkings and posset cups.

Every one has reason to be thankful, and me among the rest; for many a worse provided for and less welcome down-lying has taken place, time out of mind, throughout broad Scotland. I say this with a warm heart, as I am grateful for all my mercies. To hundreds above hundreds such a catastrophe brings scarcely any joy at all; but it was far different with me, who had a Benjamin to look for.

If the reader will be so kind as to look over the next chapter, he will find whether or not I was disappointed in my expectations.

CHAPTER VIII.

LETTING LODGINGS.

“ Then first he ate the white puddings,
And syne he ate the black, O ;
Though muckle thought the Gudewife to hersell,
Yet ne’er a word she spak, O.
But up then started our Gudeman,
And an angry man was he, O.”—*Old Song.*

It would be curious if I passed over a remarkable incident which at this time fell out. Being but new beginners in the world, the wife and I put our heads constantly together to contrive for our forward advancement, as it is the bounden duty of all to do. So our housie being rather large (two rooms and a kitchen, not speaking of a coal-cellar and a hen-house), and having as yet only the expectation of a family, we thought we could not do better than get John Varnish the painter to do off a small ticket, with “A Furnished Room to Let” on it, which we nailed out at the window ; having collected into it the choicest of our furniture, that it might fit a genteeler lodger and produce a better rent. And a lodger soon we got.

Dog on it ! I think I see him yet. He was a blackaviced Englishman, with curled whiskers, and a powdered pow, stout round the waistband, and fond of good eating, let alone drinking, as we found to our cost. Well, he was our first lodger. We sought a good price, that we might, on bargaining, have the merit of coming down a tait ; but no, no—go away wi’ ye ; it was dog-cheap to him. The half-guinea a-week was judged perfectly moderate ; but if all his debts were—yet I must not cut before the cloth.

Hang expenses ! was the order of the day. Ham and eggs for breakfast, let alone our currant jelly. Roast-mutton cold, and strong ale at twelve, by way of check, to keep away wind from the stomach. Smoking roast-beef, with scraped horse-radish, at four precisely ; and toasted cheese, punch, and porter, for supper. It would have been less, had all the things been within ourselves. Nothing had we but the cauler new-laid eggs ; then there was Deacon

Heukbane's butcher's account ; and John Cony's spirit account ; and Thomas Burling's bap account ; and deevil kens how many more accounts, that came all in upon us afterwards. But the crowning of all was reserved for the end. It was no farce at the time, and kept our heads down at the water-edge for many a day. I was just driving the hot goose along the seams of a Sunday jacket I was finishing for Thomas Clod the ploughman, when the Englisher came in at the shop door, whistling "Robin Adair," and "Scots wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled," and whiles, maybe, churming to himself like a young blackbird ;—but I have not patience to go through with it. The long and the short of the matter, however, was, that after rummaging among my two or three webs of broadcloth on the shelf, he pitched on a Manchester blue, five quarters wide, marked CXD.XF, which is to say, three-and-twenty shillings the yard. I told him it was impossible to make a pair of pantaloons to him in two hours ; but he insisted upon having them, alive or dead, as he had to go down the same afternoon to dine with my Lord Duke, no less. I convinced him that if I was to sit up all night, he could get them by five next morning, if that would do, as I would also keep my laddie, Tammy Bodkin, out of his bed ; but no—I thought he would have jumped out of his seven senses. "Just look," he said, turning up the inside seam of the leg—"just see—can any gentleman make a visit in such things as these ? they are as full of holes as a coal-sieve. I wonder the devil why my baggage has not come forward. Can I get a horse and boy to ride express to Edinburgh for a ready-made article ?"

A thought struck me ; for I had heard of wonderful advancement in the world for those who had been so lucky as help the great at a pinch. "If ye'll no take it amiss, sir," said I, making my obedience, "a notion has just struck me."

"Well, what is it ?" said he, briskly.

"Well, sir, I have a pair of knee-breeches, of most famous velveteen, double tweel, which have been only once on my legs, and that no farther gone than last Sabbath. I'm pretty sure they would fit ye in the meantime ; and I would just take a pleasure in driving the needle all night to get your own ready."

"A clever thought," said the Englisher. "Do you think they would fit me? Devilish clever thought, indeed."

"To a hair," I answered; and cried to Nanse to bring the velveteens.

I do not think he was ten minutes, when lo, and behold! out at the door he went, and away past the shop-window like a lamplighter. The buttons on the velveteens were glittering like gold at the knees. Alas! it was like the flash of the setting sun; I never beheld them more. He was to have been back in two or three hours, but the laddie, with the box on his shoulder, was going through the street crying "Hot penny-pies" for supper, and neither word nor wittens of him. I began to be a thought uneasy, and fidgeted on the board like a hen on a hot girdle. No man should do anything when he is vexed, but I could not help giving Tammy Bodkin, who was sewing away at the lining of the new pantaloons, a terrible whisk in the lug for singing to himself. I say I was vexed for it afterwards; especially as the laddie did not mean to give offence; and as I saw the blae marks of my four fingers along his chaft-blade.

The wife had been bothering me for a new gown on strength of the payment of our grand bill; and in came she, at this blessed moment of time, with about twenty swatches from Simeon Calicoe's, prinned on a screed of paper.

"Which of these do you think bonniest?" said Nanse, in a flattering way; "I ken, Mansie, you have a good taste."

"Cut not before the cloth," answered I, "gudewife," with a wise shake of my head. "It'll be time enough, I daresay, to make your choice to-morrow."

Nanse went out as if her nose had been bleeding. I could thole it no longer; so, buttoning my breeches-knees, I threw my cowl into a corner, clapped my hat on my head, and away down in full birr to the Duke's gate.

I spired at the porter, if the gentleman with the velveteen breeches and powdered hair, that was dining with the Duke, had come up the avenue yet?

"Velveteen breeches and powdered hair!" said auld Paul, laughing, and taking the pipe out of his cheek, "whose butler is't that ye're after?"

"Well," said I to him, "I see it all as plain as a pikestaff. He is off bodily; but may the meat and the drink he has taken off us be like drogs to his inside; and may the velvet-eens play crack, and cast the steeks at every step he takes!" It was no Christian wish; and Paul laughed till he was like to burst, at my expense. "Gang your ways hame, Mansie," said he to me, clapping me on the shoulder as if I had been a wean, "and give over setting traps, for ye see you have caught a Tartar."

This was too much; first to be cheated by a swindling loon, and then made game of by a flunkie; and in my desperation, I determined to do some awful thing.

Nanse followed me in from the door, and asked what news? I was ower big and ower vexed to hear her; so, never letting on, I went to the little looking-glass on the drawers' head, and set it down on the table. Then I looked myself in it for a moment, and made a gruesome face. Syne I pulled out the little drawer, and got the sharpening strap, the which I fastened to my button. Syne I took my razor from the box, and gave it five or six turns along first one side and then the other, with great precision. Syne I tried the edge of it along the flat of my hand. Syne I loosed my neckcloth, and laid it over the back of the chair; and syne I took out the button of my shirt-neck, and folded it back. Nanse, who was all the time standing behind, looking what I was after, asked me "if I was going to shave without hot water?" when I said to her in a fierce and brave manner (which was very cruel, considering the way she was in), "I'll let you see that presently." The razor looked desperate sharp; and I never liked the sight of blood; but oh, I was in a terrible flurry and fermentation. A kind of cold trembling went through me; and I thought it best to tell Nanse what I was going to do, that she might be something prepared for it. "Fare ye well, my dear!" said I to her, "you will be a widow in five minutes—for here goes!" I did not think she could have mustered so much courage, but she sprang at me like a tiger; and throwing the razor into the ass-hole, took me round the neck, and cried like a bairn. First she was seized with a fit of the hystericks, and then with her pains. It was a serious time for us both, and no joke; for my heart smote me for my sin

and cruelty. But I did my best to make up for it. I ran up and down like mad for the howdie, and at last brought her trotting along with me by the lug. I could not stand it. I shut myself up in the shop with Tammy Bodkin, like Daniel in the lions' den; and every now and then opened the door to speir what news. Oh, but my heart was like to break with anxiety! I paced up and down, and to and fro, with my Kilmarnock on my head, and my hands in my breeches pockets, like a man out of Bedlam. I thought it would never be over; but at the second hour of the morning, I heard a wee squeel, and knew that I was a father; and so proud was I, that notwithstanding our loss, Lucky Bringthereout and me whanged away at the cheese and bread, and drank so briskly at the whisky and foot-yill, that when she tried to rise and go away, she could not stir a foot. So Tammy and I had to oter her out between us, and deliver the howdie herself—safe in at her own door.

CHAPTER IX.

BENJIE'S CHRISTENING.

“ We'll hap and row, hap and row,
 We'll hap and row the feetie o't.
 It is a wee bit weary thing,
 I dinnie bide the greetie o't.”
 —PROVOST CREECH.

“ An honest man, close button'd to the chin,
 Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within.”—COWPER.

“ This great globe and all that it inherits shall dissolve,
 And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
 Leave not a rack behind.”—SHAKESPEARE.

At the christening of our only bairn, Benjie, two or three remarkable circumstances occurred, which it behoves me to relate.

It was on a cold November afternoon; and really when the bit room was all redd up, the fire bleezing away, and the candles lighted, everything looked full tosh and comfortable.

It was a real pleasure, after looking out into the drift that was fleeing like mad from the east, to turn one's neb inwards, and think that we had a civilised home to comfort us in the dreary season. So, one after another, the bit party we had invited to the ceremony came papping in; and the crack began to get loud and hearty; for, to speak the truth, we were blessed with canny friends, and a good neighbourhood. Notwithstanding, it was very curious, that I had no mind of asking down James Batter, the weaver, honest man, though he was one of our own elders; and in papped James, just when the company had haffins met, with his stocking-sleeves on his arms, his nightcap on his head, and his blue-stained apron hanging down before him, to light his pipe at our fire.

James, when he saw his mistake, was fain to make his retreat; but we would not hear tell of it till he came in and took a dram out of the bottle, as we told him the not doing so would spoil the wean's beauty, which is an old freak (the smallpox, however, afterwards did that); so with much persuasion he took a chair for a gliff, and began with some of his drolls—for he is a clever humoursome man as ye ever met with. But he had not got far on with his jests, when lo! a rap came to the door, and Mysie whipped away the bottle under her apron, saying "Wheesht, wheesht, for the sake of gudeness, there's the minister!"

The room had only one door, and James mistook it, running his head, for lack of knowledge, into the open closet, just as the minister lifted the outer-door sneck. We were all now sitting on nettles, for we were frightened that James would be seized with a cough, for he was a wee asthmatic; or that some, knowing there was a thief in the pantry, might hurt good manners by breaking out into a giggle. However, all for a considerable time was quiet, and the ceremony was performed; little Nancy, our niece, handing the bairn upon my arm to receive its name. So we thought, as the minister seldom made a long stay on similar occasions, that all would pass off well enough. But wait a wee.

There was but one of our company that had not cast up, to wit, Deacon Paunch, the flesher, a most worthy man, but tremendously big, and grown to the very heels; as was once seen on a wager, that his ankle was greater than my

brans. It was really a pain to all feeling Christians to see the worthy man waigling about, being, when weighed in his own scales, two-and-twenty stone ten ounces, Dutch weight. Honest man, he had had a sore fecht with the wind and the sleet, and he came in with a shawl roppined round his neck, peching like a broken-winded horse; so fain was he to find a rest for his weary carcass in our stuffed chintz pattern elbow-chair by the fire cheek.

From the sougling of wind at the window, and the rattling in the lun, it was clear to all manner of comprehension that the night was a dismal one; so the minister, seeing so many of his own douce folk about him, thought he might do worse than volunteer to sit still and try our toddy; indeed, we would have pressed him before this to do so, but what was to come of James Batter, who was shut up in the closet, like the spies in the house of Rahab the harlot, in the city of Jericho?

James began to find it was a bad business; and having been driving the shuttle about from before daylight, he was fain to cruik his hough, and felt round about him quietly in the dark for a chair to sit down upon, since better might not be. But wae's me! the cat was soon out of the pock.

Me and the minister were just argle-bargling some few words on the doctrine of the camel and the eye of the needle, when, in the midst of our discourse, as all was wheesht and attentive, an awful thud was heard in the closet, which gave the minister, who thought the house had fallen down, such a start, that his very wig louped for a full three-eighths off his crown. I say we were needcessitated to let the cat out of the pock for two reasons: firstly, because we did not know what had happened; and, secondly, to quiet the minister's fears, decent man, for he was a wee nervous. So we made a hearty laugh of it, as well as we could, and opened the door to bid James Batter come out, as we confessed all. Easier said than done, howsoever. When we pulled open the door, and took forward one of the candles, there was James doubled up, sticking twofold like a rotten in a sneck-trap, in an old chair, the bottom of which had gone down before him, and which, for some craze about it, had been put out of the way by Nanse, that no accident might happen. Save us! if the deacon had sat down upon it, pity on our brick-floor.

Well, after some ado, we got James, who was more frightened than hurt, hauled out of his hidy-hole ; and after lifting off his cowl, and sleeking down his front hair, he took a seat beside us, apologeezeing for not being in his Sunday's garb, the which the minister, who was a free and easy man, declared there was no occasion for, and begged him to make himself comfortable.

Well, passing over that business, Mr Wiggie and me entered into our humours, for the drappikie was beginning to tell on my noddle, and made me somewhat venturesome—not to say that I was not a little proud to have the minister in my bit housie ; so says I to him in a cosh way, “Ye may believe me or no, Mr Wiggie, but mair than me think ye out of sight the best preacher in the parish—name of them, Mr Wiggie, can hold the candle to ye, man.”

“Wheesht, wheesht,” said the body, in rather a cold way that I did not expect, knowing him to be as proud as a peacock—“I daresay I am just like my neighbours.”

This was not quite so kind—so says I to him, “Maybe sae, for many a one thinks ye could not hold a candle to Mr Blowster, the Cameronian, that whiles preaches at Lugton.”

This was a stramp on his corny toe. “Na, na,” answered Mr Wiggie, rather nettled ; “let us drop that subject. I preach like my neighbours. Some of them may be worse, and others better ; just as some of your own trade may make clothes worse, and some better, than yourself.”

My corruption was raised. “I deny that,” said I, in a brisk manner, which I was sorry for after—“I deny that, Mr Wiggie,” says I to him ; “I’ll make a pair of breeches with the face of clay.”

But this was only a passing breeze, during the which, howsoever, I happened to swallow my thimble, which accidentally slipped off my middle finger, causing both me and the company general alarm, as there were great fears that it might mortify in the stomach ; but it did not ; and neither word nor wittens of it have been seen or heard tell of from that to this day. So, in two or three minutes, we had some few good songs, and a round of Scotch proverbs, when the clock chapped eleven. We were all getting, I must confess, a thought noisy ; Johnny Soutter having broken a dram-glass, and Willie Fegs couped a bottle on the bit table-cloth ;

all noisy, I say, except Deacon Paunch, douce man, who had fallen into a pleasant slumber; so when the minister rose to take his hat, they all rose except the Deacon, whom we shook by the arms for some time, but in vain, to waken him. His round oily face, good creature, was just as if it had been cut out of a big turnip, it was so fat, fozy, and soft; but at last, after some ado, we succeeded, and he looked about him with a wild stare, opening his two red eyes, like Pandore oysters, asking what had happened; and we got him hoized up on his legs, tying the blue shawl round his bull-neck again.

Our company had not got well out of the door, and I was priding myself in my heart about being landlord to such a goodly turn-out, when Nanse took me by the arm, and said, "Come and see such an unearthly sight." This startled me, and I hesitated; but at long and last I went in with her, a thought alarmed at what had happened, and—my gracious!! there, on the easy-chair, was our bonny tortoise-shell cat, Tommy, with the red morocco collar about its neck, bruised as flat as a flounder, and as dead as a mawk!!!

The Deacon had sat down upon it without thinking; and the poor animal, that our neighbours' bairns used to play with, and be so fond of, was crushed out of life without a cheep. The thing, doubtless, was not intended, but it gave Nanse and me a very sore heart.

CHAPTER X.

THE RESURRECTION MEN.

"How then was the Devil drest!
 He was in his Sunday's best;
 His coat was red, and his breeches were blue,
 With a hole behind where his tail came thro'.
 Over the hill, and over the dale,
 And he went over the plain:
 And backward and forward he switch'd his tail,
 As a gentleman switches his cane."—COLERIDGE.

About this time there arose a great sough and surmise that some loons were playing false with the kirkyard, howk-

ing up the bodies from their damp graves, and harling them away to the College. Words cannot describe the fear, and the dool, and the misery it caused. All flocked to the kirk-yett; and the friends of the newly-buried stood by the mools, which were yet dark, and the brown newly-cast divots, that had not yet taken root, looking, with mournful faces, to descry any tokens of sinking in.

I'll never forget it. I was standing by when three young lads took shools, and, lifting up the truff, proceeded to houk down to the coffin, wherein they had laid the grey hairs of their mother. They looked wild and bewildered like, and the glance of their een was like that of folk out of a mad-house; and none dared in the world to have spoken to them. They did not even speak to one another; but wrought on with a great hurry, till the spades struck on the coffin-lid—which was broken. The dead-clothes were there huddled together in a nook, but the dead was gone. I took hold of Willie Walker's arm, and looked down. There was a cold sweat all over me;—losh me! but I was terribly frightened and eerie. Three more graves were opened, and all just alike, save and except that of a wee unchristened wean, which was off bodily, coffin and all.

There was a burst of righteous indignation throughout the parish; nor without reason. Tell me that doctors and graduates must have the dead; but tell it not to Mansie Wauch, that our hearts must be trampled in the mire of scorn, and our best feelings laughed at, in order that a bruise may be properly plaistered up, or a sore head cured. Verily, the remedy is worse than the disease.

But what remead? It was to watch in the session-house, with loaded guns, night about, three at a time. I never liked to go into the kirkyard after darkening, let-a-be to sit there through a long winter night, windy and rainy it may be, with none but the dead around us. Save us! it was an unco thought, and garred all my flesh creep; but the cause was good—my corruption was raised—and I was determined not to be daunted.

I counted and counted, but the dread day at length came and I was summoned. All the livelong afternoon, when ca'ing the needle upon the board, I tried to whistle Jenny Nettles, Neil Gow, and other funny tunes, and whiles crooned

to myself between hands ; but my consternation was visible, and all would not do.

It was in November ; and the cold glimmering sun sank behind the Pentlands. The trees had been shorn of their frail leaves, and the misty night was closing fast in upon the dull and short day ; but the candles glittered at the shop windows, and leery-light-the-lamps was brushing about with his ladder in his oxters, and bleezing flamboy sparking out behind him. I felt a kind of qualm of faintness and down-sinking about my heart and stomach, to the dispelling of which I took a thimbleful of spirits, and, tying my red comforter about my neck, I marched briskly to the session-house. A neighbour (Andrew Goldie, the pensioner) lent me his piece, and loaded it to me. He took tent that it was only half-cock, and I wrapped a napkin round the dog-head, for it was raining. Not being well acquaint with guns, I kept the muzzle aye away from me ; as it is every man's duty not to throw his precious life into jeopardy.

A furm was set before the session-house fire, which bleezed brightly, nor had I any thought that such an unearthly place could have been made to look half so comfortable either by coal or candle ; so my spirits rose up as if a weight had been taken off them, and I wondered, in my bravery, that a man like me could be afraid of anything. Nobody was there but a touzy, ragged, halfpins callant of thirteen (for I speired his age), with a desperate dirty face, and long carroty hair, tearing a speldrin with his teeth, which looked long and sharp enough, and throwing the skin and lugs into the fire.

We sat for mostly an hour together, cracking the best way we could in such a place ; nor was anybody more likely to cast up. The night was now pitmirk ; the wind soughed amid the head-stones and railings of the gentry (for we must all die), and the black corbies in the steeple-holes cackled and crawled in a fearsome manner. All at once we heard a lonesome sound ; and my heart began to play pit-pat—my skin grew all rough, like a pouked chicken—and I felt as if I did not know what was the matter with me. It was only a false alarm, however, being the warning of the clock ; and, in a minute or two thereafter, the bell struck ten. Oh, but it was a lonesome and dreary sound ! Every chap went through my breast like the dunt of a fore-hammer.

Then up and spak the red-headed laddie :—" It's no fair ; anither should hae come by this time. I wad rin awa hame, only I am frightened to gang out my lane. Do ye think the doup of that candle wad carry i' my cap ?"

" Na, na, lad ; we maun bide here, as we are here now. Leave me alane ? Lord safe us ! and the yett lockit, and the bethrel sleeping with the key in his breek pouches ! We canna win out now though we would," answered I, trying to look brave, though half frightened out of my seven senses :—" Sit down, sit down ; I've baith whisky and porter wi' me. Hae, man, there's a cawker to keep your heart warm ; and set down that bottle," quoth I, wiping the sawdust affin't with my hand, " to get a toast ; I'se warrant it for Deacon Jaffrey's best brown stout."

The wind blew higher, and like a hurricane ; the rain began to fall in perfect spouts ; the auld kirk rumbled and rowed, and made a sad sougling ; and the branches of the bourtree behind the house, where auld Cockburn that cut his throat was buried, creaked and crazed in a frightful manner ; but as to the roaring of the troubled waters, and the bumming in the lum-head, they were past all power of description. To make bad worse, just in the heart of the brattle, the grating sound of the yett turning on its rusty hinges was but too plainly heard. What was to be done ? I thought of our both running away ; and then of our locking ourselves in, and firing through the door ; but who was to pull the trigger ?

Gudeness watch over us ! I tremble yet when I think on it. We were perfectly between the de'il and the deep sea—either to stand still and fire our gun, or run and be shot at. It was really a hang choice. As I stood swithering and shaking, the laddie flew to the door, and, thraving round the key, clapped his back to it. Oh ! how I looked at him, as he stood for a gliff, like a magpie hearkening with his lug cocked up, or rather like a terrier watching a rotten. " They're coming ! they're coming !" he cried out ; " cock the piece, ye sumph ;" while the red hair rose up from his pow like feathers ; " they're coming, I hear them tramping on the gravel !" Out he stretched his arms against the wall, and brizzed his back against the door like mad ; as if he had been Samson pushing over the pillars in the house of Dagon.

"For the Lord's sake, prime the gun," he cried out, "or our throats will be cut frae lug to lug before we can cry Jack Robison! See that there's priming in the pan."

I did the best I could; but my whole strength could hardly lift up the piece, which waggled to and fro like a cock's tail on a rainy day; my knees knocked against one another, and though I was resigned to die—I trust I was resigned to die—'od, but it was a frightful thing to be out of one's bed, and to be murdered in an old session-house, at the dead hour of night, by unearthly resurrection men, or rather let me call them deevils incarnate, wrapt up in dreadnoughts, with blacked faces, pistols, big sticks, and other deadly weapons.

A snuff-snuffing was heard; and, through below the door, I saw a pair of glancing black een. 'Od, but my heart nearly louped off the bit—a snouff, and a gur-gurring, and over all the plain tramp of a man's heavy tackets and cuddy-heels among the gravel. Then came a great slap like thunder on the wall; and the laddie, quitting his grip, fell down, crying, "Fire, fire!—murder! holy murder!"

"Wha's there?" growled a deep rough voice; "open,—I'm a freend."

I tried to speak, but could not; something like a half-penny roll was sticking in my throat, so I tried to cough it up, but it would not come. "Gie the pass-word then," said the laddie, staring as if his eyes would loup out; "gie the password!"

First came a loud whistle, and then "Copmahagen," answered the voice. Oh! what a relief! The laddie started up, like one crazy with joy. "Ou! ou!" cried he, thraving round the key, and rubbing his hands; "by jingo, it's the bethrel—it's the bethrel—its auld Isaac himsell."

First rushed in the dog, and then Isaac, with his glazed hat slouched over his brow, and his horn bowet glimmering by his knee. "Has the French landed, do ye think? Losh keep us a'," said he, with a smile on his half-idiot face (for he was a kind of a sort of a natural, with an infirmity in his leg), "'od sauf us, man, put by your gun. Ye dinna mean to shoot me, do ye? What are ye about here with the door lockit? I just keppit four resurrectioners louping ower the wa'."

"Gude guide us!" I said, taking a long breath to drive the blood from my heart, and something relieved by Isaac's company—"Come now, Isaac, ye're just gieing us a fright. Isn't that true, Isaac?"

"Yes, I'm joking—and what for no?—but they might have been, for onything ye wad hae hindered them to the contrair, I'm thinking. Na, na, ye maunna lock the door: that's no fair play."

When the door was put ajee, and the furm set forment the fire, I gave Isaac a dram to keep his heart up on such a cold stormy night. 'Od, but he was a droll fellow, Isaac. He sung and leuch as if he had been boozing in Luckie Tamson's, with some of his drucken cronies. Feint a hair cared he about auld kirks, or kirkyards, or vouts, or through-stanes, or dead folk in their winding-sheets, with the wet grass growing over them; and at last I began to brighten up a wee myself; so when he had gone over a good few funny stories, I said to him, quoth I, "Mony folk, I dare-say, mak' mair noise about their sitting up in a kirkyard than it's a' worth. There's naething here to harm us?"

"I beg to differ wi' ye there," answered Isaac, taking out his horn mull from his coat pouch, and tapping on the lid in a queer style—"I could gie anither version of that story. Did ye no ken of three young doctors—Eirish students—along with some resurrectioners, as waff and wild as them-sells, firing shottie for shottie with the guard at Kirkma-breck, and lodging three slugs in ane of their backs, forbye firing a ramrod through anither ane's hat?"

This was a wee alarming—"No," quoth I; "no, Isaac, man; I never heard of it."

"But, let alane resurrectioners, do ye no think there is sic a thing as ghaists? Guide ye, man, my grannie could hae telled as muckle about them as would have filled a minister's sermons from June to January."

"Kay—kay—that's all buff," I said. "Are there nae cutty-stool businesses—are there nae marriages going on just now, Isaac?" for I was keen to change the subject.

"Ye may kay—kay, as ye like, though; I can just tell ye this:—Ye'll mind auld Armstrong with the leather breeks, and the brown three-story wig—him that was the gravedigger? Weel, he saw a ghaist wi' his leeving een—

ay, and what's better, in this very kirkyard too. It was a cauld spring morning, and daylight just coming in, whan he cam' to the yett yonder, thinking to meet his man—paidling Jock—but Jock had sleepit in, and wasna there. Weel, to the wast corner ower yonder he gaed, and throwing his coat ower a headstane, and his hat on the tap o't, he dug away with his spade, casting out the mools, and the coffin handles, and the green banes and sic like, till he stoppit a wee to take breath. What! are ye whistling to yoursell?" quoth Isaac to me, "and no hearing what's God's truth?"

"Ou ay," said I; "but ye didna tell me if onybody was cried last Sunday?"—I would have given every farthing I had made by the needle, to have been at that blessed time in my bed with my wife and wean. Ay, how I was gruning! I mostly chacked off my tongue in chittering. But all would not do.

"Weel, speaking of ghaists—when he was resting on his spade he looked up to the steeple, to see what o'clock it was, wondering what way Jock hadna come, when lo and behold! in the lang diced window of the kirk yonder, he saw a lady a' in white, with her hands clasped thegither, looking out to the kirkyard at him.

"He couldna believe his een, so he rubbit them with his sark sleeve, but she was still there bodily; and, keeping ae ee on her, and anither on his road to the yett, he drew his coat and hat to him below his arm, and aff like mad, throwing the shool half a mile ahint him. Jock fand that; for he was coming singing in at the yett, when his maister ran clean ower the tap o' him, and capsized him like a toom barrel; never stopping till he was in at his ain house, and the door baith bolted and barred at his tail.

"Did ye ever hear the like of that, Mansie? Weel, man, I'll explain the hail history of it to ye. Ye see—'Od! how sound that callant's sleeping," continued Isaac; "he's snoring like a nine-year-auld!"

I was glad he had stopped, for I was like to sink through the ground with fear; but no, it would not do.

"Dinna ye ken—sauf us! what a fearsome night this is! The trees will be all broken. What a noise in the lum! I daresay there's some auld hag of a witch-wife gaun to come rumble doun't. It's no the first time, I'll swear. Hae ye a

silver sixpence? Wad ye like that?" he bawled up the chimney. "Ye'll hae heard," said he, "lang ago, that a wee murdered wean was buried—didna ye hear a voice?—was buried below that corner—the hearthstane there, where the laddie's lying on?"

I had now lost my breath, so that I could not stop him.

"Ye never heard tell o't, didna ye? Weel, I'se tell't ye—Sauf us, what swirls of smoke coming down the chimley—I could swear something no canny's stopping up the lum-head—Gang out and see!"

At that moment a clap like thunder was heard—the candle was driven over—the sleeping laddie roared "Help!" and "Murder!" and "Thieves!" and as the furm on which we were sitting played flee backwards, cripple Isaac bellowed out, "I'm dead!—I'm killed—shot through the head!—Oh! oh! oh!"

Surely I had fainted away; for when I came to myself I found my red comforter loosed, my face all wet—Isaac rubbing down his waistcoat with his sleeve—the laddie swigging ale out of a bicker—and the brisk brown stout, which, by casting its cork, had caused all the alarm, whizz—whizz—whizzing in the chimley lug.

CHAPTER XI.

TAFFY WITH THE PIGTAIL.

"In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old man dwells, a little man;
I've heard he once was tall.
A long blue livery-coat has he,
That's fair behind and fair before;
Yet, meet him where you will, you see
At once that he is poor."—WORDSWORTH.

It was a clear starry night, in the blasty month of January; I mind it well. The snow had fallen during the afternoon; or, as Benjie came in crying, that "the auld wives o' the norlan sky were plucking their geese;" and it continued



The Bursting of the Porter Bottle.



dim and dowie till towards the gloaming, when, as the road-side labourers were dandering home from their work, some with pickaxes and others with shools, and just as our cocks and hens were going into their beds, poor things, the lift leared up to a sharp freeze, and the well-ordered stars came forth glowing over the blue sky. Between six and seven the moon rose; and I could not get my two prentices in from the door, where they were bickering one another with snow-balls, or maybe carhailling the folk on the street in their idle wantonness; so I was obliged for that night to disappoint Edie Macfarlane of the pair of black spatterdashes he was so anxious to get finished, for dancing in next day, at Souple Jack the carpenter's grand penny-wedding.

Seeing that little more good was to be expected till morning, I came to the resolution of shutting-in half an hour earlier than usual; so, as I was carrying out the shop-shutters, with my hat over my cowl, for it was desperately sharp, I mostly in my hurry knocked down an old man, that was coming up to ask me "if I was Maister Wauch the tailor and furnisher."

Having told him that I was myself, instead of a better; and having asked him to step in, that I might have a glimpse of his face at the candle, I saw that he was a stranger, dressed in a droll auld-farrant green livery-coat, faced with white. His waistcoat was cut in the Parly-voo fashion, with long lappels, and a double row of buttons down the breast; and round his neck he had a black-corded stock, such like, but not so broad, as I afterwards wore in the volunteers, when drilling under Big Sam. He had a well-worn scraper on his head, peaked before and behind, with a bit crape knotted round it, which he politely took off, making a low bow; and requesting me to bargain with him for a few articles of grand second-hand apparel, which once belonged to his master that was deceased, and which was now carried by himself, in a bundle under his left oxter.

Happening never to make a trade of dealing in this line, and not very sure like as to how the old man might have come by the bundle in these riotous and knock-him-down times, I swithered a moment, giving my chin a rub before answering; and then advised him to take a step in at his

leisure to St Mary's Wynd, where he would meet in with merchants in scores. But no; he seemed determined to strike a bargain with me; and I heard from the man's sponisible and feasible manner of speech—for he was an old weather-beaten-looking body of a creature, with gleg een, a cock nose, white locks, and a tye behind—that the clothes must have been left him, as a kind of friendly keepsake, by his master, now beneath the mools. Thinking by this, that if I got them at a wanworth I might boldly venture, I condescended to his loosing down the bundle, which was in a blue silk napkin with yellow flowers. As he was doing this, he told me that he was on his way home from the north to his own country, which lay among the green Welsh hills, far away; and that he could not carry much luggage with him, as he was obliged to travel with his baggage tied up in a bundle, on the end of his walking-staff, over his right shoulder.

Pity me! what a grand coat it was! I thought at first it must have been worn on the King's own back, honest man; for it was made of green velvet, and embroidered all round about—back seams, side seams, flaps, lappels, button-holes, nape and cuffs, with gold lace and spangles, in a manner to have dazzled the understanding of any Jew with a beard shorter than his arm. So, no wonder that it imposed on the like of me; and I was mostly ashamed to make him an offer for it of a crown-piece and a dram. The waistcoat, which was of white satin, single-breasted, and done up with silver tinsel in a most beautiful manner, I also bought from him for a couple of shillings, and four hanks of black thread. Though I would on no account or consideration give him a bode for the Hessian boots, which having cuddy-heels and long silk tassels, were by far and away over grand for the like of a tailor such as me, and fit for the Sunday's wear of some fashionable Don of the first water. However, not to part uncivilly, and be as good as my word, I brought ben Nanse's bottle, and gave him a cawker at the shop counter; and, after taking a thimbleful to myself, to drink a good journey to him, I bade him take care of his feet, as the causeway was frozen, and saw the auld flunkie safely over the strand with a candle.

Ye may easily conceive that Nanse got a surprise, when I

paraded ben to the room with the grand coat and waistcoat on, cocking up my head, putting my hands into the haunch pockets, and strutting about more like a peacock than a douce elder of Maister Wiggie's kirk ; so just as, thinking shame of myself, I was about to throw it off, I found something bulky at the bottom of the side pocket, which I discovered to be a wheen papers, fastened together with green tape. Finding they were written in a real neat hand, I put on my spectacles, and sending up the close for James Batter, we sat round the fireside, and read away like nine-year-aulds.

The next matter of consideration was, whether, in buying the coat as it stood, the paper belonged to me, or the old flunkie waiting-servant with the peaked hat. James and me, after an hour and a half's argle-bargleing pro and con, in the way of Parliament-house lawyers, came at last to be unanimously of opinion, that according to the auld Scotch proverb of

“ He that finds keeps,
And he that loses seeks,”

whatever was part or pendicle of the coat at the time of purchase, when it hung exposed for sale over the white-headed Welshman's little finger, became, according to the law of nature and nations, as James Batter wisely observed, part and pendicle of the property of me, Mansie Wauch, the legal purchaser.

Notwithstanding all this, however, I was not sincerely convinced in my own conscience ; and I daresay if the creature had cast up, and come seeking them back, I would have found myself bound to make restitution. This is not now likely to happen ; for twenty long years have come and passed away, like the sunshine of yesterday, and neither word nor wittens of the body have been seen or heard tell of ; so, according to the course of nature, being a white-headed old man, with a pigtail, when the bargain was made, his dust and bones have, in all likelihood, long ago mouldered down beneath the green turf of his own mountains, like his granfather's before him. This being the case, I daresay it is the reader's opinion as well as my own, that I am quite at liberty to make what use of them I like. Con-

cerning the poem things that came first in hand, I do not pretend to be any judge; but James thinks he could scarcely write any muckle better himself: so here goes; but I cannot tell you to what tune:—

SONG.

I.

THEY say that other eyes are bright,
I see no eyes like thine;
So full of heaven's serenest light,
Like midnight stars they shine.

II.

They say that other cheeks are fair—
But fairer cannot glow
The rosebud in the morning air,
Or blood on mountain snow.

III.

Thy voice—oh sweet it streams to me,
And charms my raptured breast;
Like music on the moonlight sea,
When waves are lull'd to rest.

IV.

The wealth of worlds were vain to give
Thy sinless heart to buy;
Oh I will bless thee while I live,
And love thee till I die!

From this song it appears a matter beyond doubt—for I know human nature—that the flunkie's master had, in his earlier years, been deeply in love with some beautiful young lady, that loved him again, and that maybe, with a bounding and bursting heart, durst not let her affection be shown, from dread of her cruel relations, who insisted on her marrying some lord or baronet that she did not care one button about. If so, unhappy pair, I pity them! Were we to guess our way in the dark a wee farther, I think it not altogether unlikely, that he must have fallen in with his sweetheart abroad, when wandering about on his travels; for what

follows seems to come as it were from her, lamenting his being called to leave her forlorn, and return home. This is all merely supposition on my part, and in the antiquarian style, whereby much is made out of little; but both me and James Batter are determined to be unanimously of this opinion, until otherwise convinced to the contrary. Love is a fiery and fierce passion everywhere; but I am told that we, who live in a more favoured land, know very little of the terrible effects it sometimes causes, and the bloody tragedies which it has a thousand times produced, where the heart of man is uncontrolled by reason or religion, and his blood heated into a raging fever, by the burning sun that glows in the heaven above his head.

Here follows the poem of Taffy's master's foreign sweetheart; which, considering it to be a woman's handiwork, is, I daresay, not that far amiss.

SONG OF THE SOUTH.

I.

OF all the garden flowers,
 The fairest is the rose;
 Of winds that stir the bowers,
 Oh! there is none that blows
 Like the south—the gentle south—
 For that balmy breeze is ours.

II.

Cold is the frozen north;
 In its stern and savage mood,
 'Mid gales, come drifting forth
 Bleak snows and drenching flood:
 But the south—the gentle south—
 Thaws to love the willing blood.

III.

Bethink thee of the vales,
 With their birds and blossoms fair—
 Of the darkling nightingales,
 That charm the starry air
 In the south—the gentle south—
 Ah! our own dear home is there.

IV.

Where doth Beauty brightest glow,
With each rich and radiant charm,
Eye of light, and brow of snow,
Cherry lip, and bosom warm?
In the south—the gentle south—
There she waits, and works her harm.

V.

Say, shines the Star of Love,
From the clear and cloudless sky,
The shadowy groves above,
Where the nestling ringdoves lie?
From the south—the gentle south—
Gleams its lone and lucid eye.

VI.

Then turn ye to the home
Of your brethren and your bride;
Far astray your steps may roam,
But more joys for thee abide,
In the south—our gentle south—
Than in all the world beside.

After reading a lot of the unknown gentleman's compositions in prose and verse, something like his private history, James Batter informs me, can be made out, provided we are allowed to eke a little here and there. That he was an Englisher we both think amounts to a probability; and from having an old "Taffy was a Welshman" for a flunkie, it would not be out of the order of nature to jealousy that he may have resided somewhere among the hills, where he had picked him up and taken him into his kitchen, promoting him thereafter, for sobriety and good conduct, to be his body servant and gentleman's gentleman. Where he was born, however, is a matter of doubt, and also who were his folks; but of a surety, he was either born with a silver spoon in his mouth, or rose from the ranks like many another great man. That, however, is a matter of moonshine; we are all descended in a direct line from Adam. Where he was educated does not appear; but there can scarcely be a shadow of doubt that he was for a considerable while at some school or other, where he had a number of cronies. In proof of

this, and to show that we have good reasons for our suppositions, James recommends me to print the following rignarole meditations, on the top of which is written in half-text,

SCHOOL RECOLLECTIONS.

“—They who in the vale of years advance,
And the dark eve is closing on their way,
When on the mind the recollections glance
Of early joy, and Hope’s delightful day,
Behold, in brighter hues than those of truth,
The light of morning on the fields of youth.”

—SOUTHEY.

The morning being clear and fine, full of Milton’s “vernal delight and joy,” I determined on a saunter; the inclemency of the weather having, for more than a week, kept me a prisoner at home. Although now advanced into the heart of February, a great fall of snow had taken place; the roads were blocked up; the mails obstructed; and, while the merchant grumbled audibly for his letters, the politician, no less chagrined, conned over and over again his dingy rumpled old newspaper, compelled “to eat the leek of his disappointment.” The wind, which had blown inveterately steady from the surly north-east, had veered, however, during the preceding night, to the west; and, as it were by the spell of an enchanter, an instant thaw commenced. In the low grounds the snow gleamed forth in patches of a pearly whiteness; but, on the banks of southern exposure, the green grass and the black trodden pathway again showed themselves. The vicissitudes of twenty-four hours were indeed wonderful. Instead of the sharp frost, the pattering hail, and the congealed streams, we had the blue sky, the vernal zephyr, and the genial sunshine; the stream murmuring with a broader wave, as if making up for the season spent in the fetters of congelation; and that luxurious flow of the spirits, which irresistibly comes over the heart, at the reassertion of Nature’s suspended vigour.

As I passed on under the budding trees, how delightful it was to hear the lark and the linnet again at their cheerful songs, to be aware that now “the winter was over and gone;” and to feel that the prospect of summer, with its

lengthening days, and its rich variety of fruits and flowers, lay fully before us. There is something within us that connects the spring of the year with the childhood of our existence, and it is more especially at that season that the thrilling remembrances of long departed pleasures are apt to steal into the thoughts ; the reawakening of nature calling us, by a fearful contrast, to the contemplation of joys that never can return, while all the time the heart is rendered more susceptible by the beauteous renovation in the aspect of the external world.

This sensation pressed strongly on my mind as I chanced to be passing the door of the village school, momentarily opened for the admission of one, creeping along somewhat tardily with satchel on back, and "shining morning face." What a sudden burst of sound was emitted—what harmonious discord—what a commixture of all the tones in the vocal gamut, from the shrill treble to the deep under-hum ! A chord was touched which vibrated in unison ; boyish days and school recollections crowded upon me ; pleasures long vanished ; feelings long stifled ; and friendships—ay, everlasting friendships—cut asunder by the sharp stroke of death !

A public school is a petty world within itself—a wheel within a wheel—in so far as it is entirely occupied with its own concerns, affords its peculiar catalogue of virtues and vices, its own cares, pleasures, regrets, anticipations, and disappointments—in fact, a Lilliputian fac-simile of the great one. By grown men, nothing is more common than the assertion that childhood is a perfect Elysium ; but it is a false supposition that school-days are those of unalloyed carelessness and enjoyment. It seems to be a great deal too much overlooked, that "little things are great to little men ;" and perhaps the mind of boyhood is more active in its conceptions—more alive to the impulses of pleasure and pain—in other words, has a more extended scope of sensations, than during any other portion of our existence. Its days are not those of lack-occupation ; they are full of stir, animation, and activity, for it is then we are in training for after-life ; and, when the hours of school restraint glide slowly over, "like wounded snakes," the clock, that chimes to liberty, sends forth the blood with a livelier flow ; and

pleasure thus derives a double zest from the bridle that duty has imposed, joy being generally measured according to the difficulty of its attainment. What delight in life have we ever experienced more exquisite than that which flowed at once in upon us from the teacher's "*bene, bene,*" our own self-approbation, and release from the tasks of the day?—the green fields around us wherein to ramble, the stream beside us wherein to angle, the world of games and pastimes "before us where to choose." Words are inadequate to express the thrill of transport with which, on the rush from the schoolhouse door, the hat is waved in air, and the shout sent forth!

Then what a variety of amusements succeed each other. Every month has its favourite ones. The sportsman does not more keenly scrutinise his calendar for the commencement of the trouting, grouse-shooting, or hare-hunting season, than the youngster for the time of flying kites, bowling at cricket, football, spinning peg-tops, and playing at marbles. Pleasure is the focus, which it is the common aim to approximate; and the mass is guided by a sort of unpremeditated social compact, which draws them out of doors as soon as meals are discussed, with a sincere thirst of amusement, as certainly as rooks congregate in spring to discuss the propriety of building nests, or swallows in autumn to deliberate in conclave on the expediency of emigration.

Then how perfectly glorious was the anticipation of a holiday—a long summer day of liberty and ease! In anticipation it was a thing boundless and endless, a foretaste of Elysium. It extended from the *prima luce*, from the earliest dawn of radiance that streaked the "severing clouds in yonder east," through the sun's matin, meridian, post-meridian, and vesper circuit; from the disappearance of Lucifer in the reilluminated skies, to his evening *entrée* in the character of Hesperus. Complain not of the brevity of life; 'tis *men* that are idle; a thousand things could be contrived and accomplished in that space, and a thousand schemes were devised by us, when *boys*, to prevent any portion of it passing over without improvement. We pursued the fleet angel of time through all his movements till he blessed us.

With these and similar thoughts in my mind, I strayed down to the banks of the river, and came upon the very spot which, in those long-vanished years, had been a favourite scene of our boyish sports. The impression was overpowering; and as I gazed silently around me, my mind was subdued to that tone of feeling which Ossian so finely designates "the joy of grief." The trees were the same, but older, like myself; seemingly unscathed by the strife of years—and herein was a difference. Some of the very bushes I recognised as our old lurking-places at "hunt the hare;" and, on the old fantastic beech-tree, I discovered the very bough from which we were accustomed to suspend our swings. What alterations—what sad havoc had time, circumstances, the hand of fortune, and the stroke of death, made among us since then! How were the thoughts of the heart, the hopes, the pursuits, the feelings changed; and, in almost every instance, it is to be feared, for the worse! As I gazed around me, and paused, I could not help reciting aloud to myself the lines of Charles Lamb, so touching in their simple beauty:—

"I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.
Some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me, all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces."

The fresh green plat, by the brink of the stream, lay before me. It was there that we played at leap-frog, or gathered dandelions for our tame rabbits; and, at its western extremity, were still extant the reliques of the deal-seat, at which we used to assemble on autumn evenings to have our round of stories. Many a witching tale and wondrous tradition hath there been told; many a marvel of "figures that visited the glimpses of the moon;" many a recital of heroic and chivalrous enterprise, accomplished ere warriors dwindled away to the mere puny strength of mortals. Sapped by the wind and rain, the planks lay in a sorely decayed and rotten state, looking in their mossiness like a sign-post of desolation, a memento of terrestrial instability. Traces of the knife were still here and there visible upon the

trunks of the supporting trees ; and with little difficulty I could decipher some well-remembered initials.

“ Cold were the hands that carved them there.”

It is, no doubt, wonderful that the human mind can retain such a mass of recollections ; yet we seem to be, in general, little aware that for one solitary incident in our lives, preserved by memory, hundreds have been buried in the silent charnel-house of oblivion. We peruse the past, like a map of pleasing or melancholy recollections, and observe lines crossing and recrossing each other in a thousand directions ; some spots are almost blank ; others faintly traced ; and the rest a confused and perplexed labyrinth. A thousand feelings that, in their day and hour, agitated our bosoms, are now forgotten ; a thousand hopes, and joys, and apprehensions, and fears, are vanished without a trace. Schemes, which cost us much care in their formation, and much anxiety in their fulfilment, have glided, like the clouds of yesterday, from our remembrance. Many a sharer of our early friendships, and of our boyish sports, we think of no more ; they are as if they had never been, till perhaps some accidental occurrence, some words in conversation, some object by the wayside, or some passenger in the street, attract our notice—and then, as if awaking from a perplexing trance, a light darts in upon our darkness ; and we discover that thus some one long ago spoke, that there something long ago happened ; or that the person, who just passed us like a vision, shared smiles with us long, long years ago, and added a double zest to the enjoyments of our childhood.

Of our old class-fellows, of those whose days were of “ a mingled yarn ” with ours, whose hearts blended in the warmest reciprocities of friendship, whose joys, whose cares, almost whose wishes were in common, how little do we know ? how little will even the severest scrutiny enable us to discover ? Yet at one time we were inseparable, “ like Juno’s swans ; ” we were as brothers, nor dreamt we of aught else, in the susceptibility of our youthful imagination, than that we were to pass through all the future scenes of life side by side ; and, mutually supporting and supported, lengthen out the endearments, the ties, and the feelings of boyhood unto the extremities of existence. What a fine

but a fond dream—alas, how wide of the cruel reality ! The casual relation of a traveller may discover to us where one of them resided or resides. The page of an obituary may accidentally inform us how long one of them lingered on the bed of sickness, and by what death he died. Some we may perhaps discover in elevated situations, from which worldly pride might probably prevent their stooping down to recognise us. Others, immersed in the labyrinths of business, have forgot all, in the selfish pursuits of earthly accumulation. While the rest, the children of misfortune and disappointment, we may occasionally find out amid the great multitude of the streets, to whom life is but a desert of sorrow, and against whom prosperity seems to have shut for ever her golden gates.

Such are the diversities of condition, the varieties of fortune to which man is exposed, while climbing the hill of probationary difficulty. And how sublimely applicable are the words of Job, expatiating on the uncertainty of human existence : “ Man dieth and wasteth away ; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up ; so man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more.”

While standing on the same spot, where of yore the boyish multitude congregated in pursuit of their eager sports, a silent awe steals over the bosom, and the heart desponds at the thought that all these once smiling faces are scattered now ! Some, mayhap, tossing on the waste and perilous seas ; some the merchants of distant lands ; some fighting the battles of their country ; others dead—inhabitants of the dark and narrow house, and hearing no more the billows of life, that thunder and break above their low and lonely dwelling-place !

Nanse, who was sitting by the table knitting a pair of light-blue worsted stockings for Benjie, and myself, who was sewing on the buttons of a velveteen jacket for a country lad, were, I must say, not a little delighted, not only with the way in which the Welshman's late master had spoken of his schoolfellows, but with the manner in which James Batter, with his specs on, had read it over to us. Upon my word—and that of an elder—I do not

believe that even Mr Wiggie himself could have done the thing greater justice. It was just as if he had been a play-actor man, spouting Douglas's tragedy.

Having folded up that paper, and turned over not a few others, the docketings of which he read out to us, James at last says, "Ou ay, here it is. I think I can now prove to ye that the gentleman's sweetheart died abroad; and that, likely from her name—for it is here mentioned—she must have been a Portugée or Spaniard."

"Ay, let us hear it," cried Nanse. "Do, like a man, let us hear it, James; for I delight above a' things to hear about love-stories. Do ye mind, Maister," she said, "when ye was so deep in love aince yoursell?"

"Foolish woman," I said, giving her a kind of severe look; "is that all your manners to interrupt Mr Batter? If ye'll just keep a calm sough, ye'll hear the long and the short o't, in good time."

By this, James, who did not relish interruption, and was a thought fidgety in his natural temper, had laid down the paper on the table, snuffed the candle, and raised his spectacles on his brow. But I said to him, "Excuse freedoms, James, and be so good as resume your discourse." Then wishing to smooth him down, I added, by way of compliment—"Do go on; for you really are a prime reader. Nature surely intended ye for a minister."

"Dinna flatter me," said James, looking, however, rather proudly at what I had said; and replacing his glasses on the brig of his nose, he then read us a screed of metre to the following effect—part of which, I am free to confess, is rather above my comprehension. But never mind:—

ELEGIAC STANZAS.

I.

'Tis midnight deep; the full round moon,
As 'twere a spectre, walks the sky;
The balmy breath of gentlest June
Just stirs the stream that murmurs by;
Above me frowns the solemn wood;
Nature, methinks, seems Solitude
Embodied to the eye.

II.

Yes, 'tis a season and a scene,
Inez, to think on thee ; the day,
With stir and strife, may come between
Affection and thy beauty's ray,
But feeling here assumes control,
And mourns my desolated soul
That thou art rapt away !

III.

Thou wert a rainbow to my sight,
The storms of life before thee fled ;
The glory and the guiding light,
That onward cheer'd and upward led
From boyhood to this very hour,
For me, and only me, thy flower
Its fragrance seemed to shed.

IV.

Dark though the world for me might show
Its sordid faith and selfish gloom,
Yet 'mid life's wilderness to know
For me that sweet flower shed its bloom
Was joy, was solace :—thou art gone—
And hope forsook me, when the stone
Sank darkly o'er thy tomb.

V.

And art thou dead ? I dare not think
That thus the solemn truth can be ;
And broken is the only link
That chain'd youth's pleasant thoughts to me !
Alas ! that thou couldst know decay,
That, sighing, I should live to say,
'The cold grave holdeth thee !'

VI.

For me thou shon'st, as shines a star,
Lonely, in clouds when Heaven is lost ;
Thou wert my guiding light afar,
When on misfortune's billows tost :
Now darkness hath obscured that light,
And I am left in rayless night,
On Sorrow's lowering coast.

VII.

And art thou gone ? I deem'd thee some
 Immortal essence—art thou gone ?—
 I saw thee laid within the tomb,
 And turn'd away to mourn alone :
 Once to have loved, is to have loved
 Enough ; and, what with thee I proved,
 Again I'll seek in none.

VIII.

Earth in thy sight grew faëry-land ;—
 Life was Elysium—thought was love,—
 When, long ago, hand clasp'd in hand,
 We roam'd through Autumn's twilight grove ;
 Or watch'd the broad uprising moon
 Shed, as it were, a wizard noon,
 The blasted heath above.

IX.

Farewell !—and must I say farewell ?—
 No—thou wilt ever be to me
 A present thought ; thy form shall dwell
 In love's most holy sanctuary ;
 Thy voice shall mingle with my dreams,
 And haunt me, when the shot-star gleams
 Above the rippling sea.

X.

Never revives the past again ;
 But still thou art, in lonely hours,
 To me earth's heaven,—the azure main,—
 Soft music,—and the breath of flowers ;
 My heart shall gain from thee its hues :
 And Memory give, though Truth refuse,
 The bliss that once was ours !

After this, Mr Batter read over to us a great many other curiosities about foreign things wonderful to hear, and foreign places wonderful to behold. Moreover, also, of divers adventures by sea and land. But the time wearing late, and Tammie Bodkin having brought ben the shop-key, after putting on the window-shutters, Nanse and I,

out of good-fellowship, thought we could not do less than ask the honest man, whose cleverality had diverted us so much, to sit still and take a chack of supper. James being up in the air, from having been allowed to ride on his hobby so briskly, made only a show of objection ; so, after a rizzard haddo, we had a jug of toddy, and sat round the fire with our feet on the fender—Benjie having fallen asleep with his clothes on, and been carried away to his bed. Poor bit mannikin !

I never remember to have heard James so prime either on Boston or Josephus ; but as his heart warmed with the liquor and the good fire—for it was a cold rawish night—he returned to Taffy with the pigtail's master ; and insisted, that as we had heard about his foreign sweetheart's death, which he appeared to have taken so much to heart, we should just bear with him once more, as he read over what he called her dirgie, which was written on a half-sheet of grey mouldy paper—as if handed down from the days of the Covenanters. It jingles well ; and both Nanse and me thought it gey and pretty ; but eh ! if ye only had heard how James Batter read it. It beat cock-fighting.

DIRGE.

I.

WEEP not for her !—Oh she was far too fair,
 Too pure to dwell on this guilt-tainted earth !
 The sinless glory, and the golden air
 Of Zion, seem'd to claim her from her birth ;
 A Spirit wander'd from its native zone,
 Which, soon discovering, took her for its own :
 Weep not for Her !

II.

Weep not for her !—Her span was like the sky,
 Whose thousand stars shine beautiful and bright ;
 Like flowers that know not what it is to die ;
 Like long-link'd, shadeless months of Polar light ;
 Like music floating o'er a waveless lake,
 While Echo answers from the flowery brake :
 Weep not for Her !

III.

Weep not for her !—She died in early youth,
 Ere hope had lost its rich romantic hues ;
 When human bosoms seem'd the homes of truth,
 And earth still gleam'd with beauty's radiant dews.
 Her summer prime waned not to days that freeze ;
 Her wine of life was run not to the lees :
 Weep not for Her !

IV.

Weep not for her !—By fleet or slow decay,
 It never grieved her bosom's core to mark
 The playmates of her childhood wane away,
 Her prospects wither, or her hopes grow dark ;
 Translated by her God with spirit shriven,
 She pass'd as 'twere in smiles from earth to heaven :
 Weep not for Her !

V.

Weep not for her !—It was not hers to feel
 The miseries that corrode amassing years,
 'Gainst dreams of baffled bliss the heart to steel,
 To wander sad down age's vale of tears,
 As whirl the wither'd leaves from friendship's tree,
 And on earth's wintry wold alone to be :
 Weep not for Her !

VI.

Weep not for her !—She is an angel now,
 And treads the sapphire floors of paradise :
 All darkness wiped from her refulgent brow,
 Sin, sorrow, suffering, banish'd from her eyes ;
 Victorious over death, to her appear
 The vista'd joys of heaven's eternal year :
 Weep not for Her !

VII.

Weep not for her !—Her memory is the shrine
 Of pleasant thoughts, soft as the scent of flowers,
 Calm as on windless eve the sun's decline,
 Sweet as the song of birds among the bowers,
 Rich as a rainbow with its hues of light,
 Pure as the moonshine of an autumn night :
 Weep not for Her !

VIII.

Weep not for her !—There is no cause for woe ;
But rather nerve the spirit that it walk
Unshrinking o'er the thorny paths below,
And from earth's low defilements keep thee back :
So, when a few fleet severing years have flown,
She'll meet thee at heaven's gate—and lead thee on !
Weep not for Her.

Having right and law on my side, as any man of judgment may perceive with half an eye, nothing could hinder me, if I so liked, to print the whole bundle ; but, in the meantime, we must just be satisfied with the foregoing curiosities, which we have picked out. All that I have set down concerning myself, the reader may take on credit as open and even-down truth ; but as to whether Taffy's master's nick-nackets be true or false, every one is at liberty, in this free country, to think for himself. Old sparrows are not easily caught with chaff ; and unless I saw a proper affidavit, I would not, for my own part, pin my faith to a single word of them. But every man his own opinion,—that's my motto.

In the Yankee Almanack of Poor Richard, which, besides the Pilgrim's Progress and the Book of Martyrs, I whiles read on the week-days for a little diversion, I see it is set down with great rationality that “we should never buy for the bargain sake.” Experience teaches all men, and I found that to my cost in this matter ; for, cheap as the coat and waistcoat seemed which I had bought from the auld-farrant Welsh flunkie with the peaked hat and the pigtail, I made no great shakes of them after all. Neither the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, nor any other of the grand public characters, ever made me an offer for them, as some had led me to expect ; and the playhouse people lay all as quiet as ducks in a storm. After hanging at my window for two or three months, collecting all the idle wives and weans of the parish to glour and gaze at them from morn till night, during which time I got half of my lozens broken, by their knocking one another's heads through, I was obliged to get quit of them at last, by selling them to a man and his son, that kept dancing-dogs, Pan's pipes, and a tambourine, and that made a livelihood by tumbling on a carpet in the middle of

the street, the one playing "Carle, now the King's come," as the other whummed head over heels, and then jumped up into the air, cutting capers, to show that not a bone of his body had been broken.

Knowing that the raiment was not for everybody's wear, and that the like of it was not to be found in a country side, I put a decent price on it, "foreign birds with fair feathers" aye taking the top place of the market. When I mentioned forty shillings to the dancing-dog man and his son, they said nothing, but, putting their tongues in their cheeks, took up their hats, wishing me a good day. Next forenoon, however, a sleight-of-hand character having arrived, together with a bass drum and a bugle horn, that was likely to take the shine out of them, and maybe also purchase my article—which was capital for his purpose, having famous wide sleeves—they came back in less than no time, asking the liberty, before finally concluding with me, of carrying them home to their lodgings for ten minutes to see how they would fit; and, in that case, offering me thirty-five shillings and an old flute. The old flute was for next to no use at all, except for wee Benjie, poor thing, too-tooing on, to keep him good, and I told them so, myself being no musicianer; but would take their offer not to quarrel. It would not do unless some of us were timber-tuned—men not being meant for blackbirds.

Home went the man, and home went the son, and home went my grand coat and waistcoat over his arm; and putting my hands into my breeches pockets, as if I had satisfactorily concluded a great transaction, I marched ben to the back shop, and took my needle into play, as if nothing in the world had happened; but where their home lay, or whether the raiment fitted or not, goodness knows, having never to this blessed hour heard word or wittens of either of them. Such a pair of blacks! It just shows us how simple we Scotch folk are. The London man swindled me out of my lawful room-rent and my Sunday velveteens; the Eirishers, as will be but too soon seen, made free with my hen-house, committing felonious robbery at the dead hour of night; and here a decent-looking old Welshman, with a pigtail tied with black tape, palmed a grand coat and waistcoat upon me, that were made away with by a

man and his son, a devilish deal too long out of Botany Bay.

Benjie, poor doggie, was vastly proud of the flute, which he fided away on morning, noon, and night, and for more than a fortnight would not go to his bed unless it was laid under his pillow. But for me I could not bide the sight of it, knowing whose hands it had been in, and reminding me as it did of the depravity of human nature.

Verily, verily, this is a wonderfully wicked world. To find out the two vagabonds would have been hopeless, unless I could have followed them to the Back of Beyond, where the mare foaled the fiddler.

CHAPTER XII.

VOLUNTEERING.

“ Come from the hills where your hirsels are grazing,
 Come from the glen of the buck and the roe ;
 Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing,
 Come with the buckler, the lance, and the bow :
 Many a banner spread
 Flutters above your head,
 Many a crest that is famous in story ;
 Mount and make ready then,
 Sons of the mountain glen,
 Fight for the *King*, and our old Scottish glory.”

—SIR WALTER SCOTT'S *Monastery*.

The sough of war and invasion flew over the face of the land, at this time, like a great whirlwind ; and the hearts of men died within their persons with fear and trembling. The accounts that came from abroad were just dreadful beyond all power of description. Death stalked about from place to place, like a lawless tyrant, and human blood was spilt like water ; while the heads of crowned kings were cut off ; and great dukes and lords were thrown into dark dungeons, or obligated to flee for their lives into foreign lands, and to seek out hiding-places of safety beyond the waves of the sea. What was worst of all, our trouble seemed a smittal one ; the infection spread around ; and even our

own land, which all thought hale and healthy, began to show symptoms of the plague-spot. Losh me ! that men in their seven senses could have ever shown themselves so infatuated ! Johnny Wilkes and liberty was but a joke to what was hanging over the head of the nation, brewing like a dark tempest which was to swallow it up. Bills were posted up through night, by hands that durst not have been seen at the work through day ; and the agents of the Spirit of Darkness, calling themselves the Friends of the People, held secret meetings, and hatched plots to blow up our blessed King and Constitution.

Yet the business, though fearsome in the main, was in some parts almost laughable. Everything was to be divided, and every one made alike : houses and lands were to be distributed by lot ; and the mighty man and the beggar—the auld man and the hobbledehoy—the industrious man and the spendthrift—the maimed, the cripple, and the blind—the clever man of business and the haveril simpleton,—made all just brethren, and alike. Save us ! but to think of such nonsense !! At one of their meetings, held at the sign of the Tappit Hen and the Tankard, there was a prime fight of five rounds between Tammy Bowsie the snab, and auld Thrashem the dominie with the boulie-back, about their drawing cuts which was to get Dalkeith Palace, and which Newbottle Abbey. Oh, sic riff-raff !!!

What was worst of all, it was an agreed and determined on thing among them, these wise men of Gotham, to abolish all kings, clergy, and religion, as havers. No, no—what need had such wise pows as theirs of being taught or lectured to ? What need had such feelosophers of having a king to rule over, or a Parliament to direct them ? There was not a single one among their number that did not think himself, in his own conceit, as wise as Solomon or William Pitt, and as mighty as King Nebuchadnezzar.

It was full time to put a stop to all such nonsense. The newspapers told us what it had done abroad ; and what better could we expect from it at home ? Weeds will not grow into flowers anywhere, and no man can handle tar without being defiled ; the first of which comparisons is, I daresay, true, and the latter must be—for we read of it in Scripture. - Well, as I was saying, it was a brave notion of

the king to put the loyalty of his land to the test, that the daft folk might be dismayed, and that the clanjamphrey might be tumbled down before their betters, like windlestraes in a hurricane :—and so they were.

Such a crowd that day, when the names of the volunteers came to be taken down ! No house could have held them, even though many had not stepped forward who thought to have got themselves enrolled. Losh me ! did they think the Government was so far gone as to take characters with deformed legs, and thrawn necks, and blind eyes, and hashie lips, and grey hairs on their pows ? No, no, they were not put to such straits ; though it showed that the right spirit was in the creatures, and that, though their bodies might be deformed, they had consciences to direct them, and souls to be saved like their neighbours.

I will never forget the first day that I got my regimentals on, and when I looked myself in the bit glass, just to think I was a sodger who never in my life could thole the smell of powder, and had not fired anything but a penny cannon on a fourth of June, when I was a haffins callant. I thought my throat would have been cut with the black corded stock ; for whenever I looked down, without thinking like, my chaff-blade played clank against it with such a dunt that I mostly chacked my tongue off. And as to the soaping of the hair, that beat cock-fighting. It was really fearsome. But I could scarcely keep from laughing when I glee'd round over my shoulder, and saw a glazed leather queue hanging for half an ell down the braid of my back, and a pickle horse-hair curling out like a rotten's tail at the far end of it. And then the worsted taissels on the shoulders—and the lead buttons—and the yellow facings,—oh, but it was grand ! I sometimes fancied myself a general, and giving the word of command. Then the pipeclayed breeches—but that was a sore job ; many a weary arm did they give me—beat-beating camstane into them.

The pipeclaying of the breeches, I was saying, was the most fashious job, let alone courtship, that ever mortal man put his hand to. Indeed, there was no end to the rubbing, and scrubbing, and brushing, and fyling, and cleaning ; for to the like of me, who was not well accustomed to the thing, the whitening was continually coming off and destroying my

red coat, or my black leggings. I had mostly forgot to speak of the birse for cleaning out the pan, and the piker for clearing the motion-hole. But time enough till we come to firing.

Big Sam, who was a sergeant of the Fencibles, and enough to have put five Frenchmen to flight any day of the year, whiles came to train us; and a hard battle he had with more than me. I have already said that nature never intended me for the soldiering trade; and why should I hesitate about confessing that Sam never got me out of the awkward squad? But I had two or three neighbours to keep me in countenance. A weary work we made with the right, left—left, right,—right-wheel, left-wheel—to the right about,—at ease,—attention,—by sections,—and all the rest of it. But then there is nothing in the course of nature that is useless; and what was to hinder me from acting as orderly, or being one of the camp-colour-men on head days?

We all cracked very crouse about fighting, when we heard of garments rolled in blood only from abroad; but one dark night we got a fleg in sober earnest.

There were signal-posts on the hills, up and down all the country, to make alarms in case of necessity; and I never went to my bed without giving first a glee eastward to Falside-brae, and then another westward to the Calton-hill, to see that all the country was quiet. I had just papped in—it might be about nine o'clock—after being gey hard drilled, and sore between the shoulders, with keeping my head back and playing the dumb-bells; when, lo and behold! instead of getting my needful rest in my own bed, with my wife and wean, jow went the bell, and row-de-dow gaed the drums, and all in a minute was confusion and uproar. I was seized with a severe shaking of the knees and a flaffing at the heart; but I hurried, with my nightcap on, up to the garret window, and there I too plainly saw that the French had landed—for all the signal-posts were in a bleeze. This was in reality to be a soldier! I never got such a fright since the day I was cleckit. Then such a noise and hullabaloo in the streets—men, women, and weans all hurrying through ither, and crying with loud voices, amid the dark, as if the day of judgment had come, to find us all unprepared; and still the bells ringing, and

the drums beating to arms. Poor Nanse was in a bad condition, and I was well worse : she, at the fears of losing me, their bread-winner ; and I, with the grief of parting from her, the wife of my bosom, and going out to scenes of blood, bayonets, and gunpowder, none of which I had the least stomach for. Our little son Benjie mostly grat himself blind, pulling me back by the cartridge-box ; but there was no contending with fate, so he was obliged at last to let go.

Notwithstanding all that, we behaved ourselves like true-blue Scotsmen called forth to fight the battles of our country ; and if the French had come, as they did not come, they would have found that to their cost, as sure as my name is Mansie. However, it turned out as well, in the meantime, that it was a false alarm, and that the thief Buonaparte had not landed at Dunbar, as it was jealoused : so, after standing under arms for half the night, with nineteen rounds of ball-cartridge in our boxes, and the baggage-carts all loaden, and ready to follow us to the field of battle, we were sent home to our beds ; and, notwithstanding the awful state of alarm to which I had been put, never in the course of my life did I enjoy six hours' sounder sleep—for we were hippet the morning parade, on account of our gallant men being kept so long without natural rest. It is wise to pick a lesson even out of our adversities ; and, at all events, it was at this time fully shown to us the necessity of our regiment being taught the art of firing—a tactic to the length of which it had never yet come.

Next day, out we were taken for the whilk purpose ; and we went through our motions bravely. Prime—load—handle cartridge—ram down cartridge—return bayonets—and shoulder hoop,—make ready—present—fire. Such was the confusion, and the flurry, and the din of the report, that I was so flustered and confused, thinking that half of us would have been shot dead, that—will ye believe it?—I never yet had mind to pull the tricker. Howsomever, I minded aye with the rest to ram down a fresh cartridge at the word of command ; and something told me I would repent not doing like the rest (for I had half a kind of notion that my piece never went off) : so, when the firing was over, the sergeant of the company ordered all that had



The awkward Squad.

loaded pieces to come to the front. I swithered a little, not being very sure like what to do; but some five or six stepped out; and our corporal, on looking at my piece, ordered me with the rest to the front. It was just by all the world like an execution: we six, in the face of the regiment, in a little line, going through our manœuvres at the word of command; and I could hardly stand upon my feet, with a queer feeling of fear and trembling, till at length the terrible moment came. I looked straight forward—for I durst not jee my head about—and turned to the hills and green trees, as if I was never to see nature more.

Our pieces were cocked; and at the word—Fire!—off they went. It was an act of desperation to draw the tricker, and I had hardly well shut my blinkers, when I got such a thump in the shoulder, as knocked me backwards head-over-heels on the grass. Before I came to my senses, I could have sworn I was in another world; but when I opened my eyes, there were the men at ease, holding their sides, laughing like to spleet them, and my gun lying on the ground, two or three ell before me.

When I found myself not killed outright, I began to rise up. As I was rubbing my breek-knees, I saw one of the men going forward to lift up the fatal piece; and my care for the safety of others overcame the sense of my own peril,—"Let alane—let alane!" cried I to him, "and take care of yoursell, for it has to gang off five times yet."

The laughing was now terrible; but being little of a soldier, I thought, in my innocence, that we should hear as many reports as I had crammed cartridges down her muzzle. This was a sore joke against me for a length of time; but I tholed it patiently, considering cannily within myself that knowledge is only to be bought by experience, and that, if we can credit the old song, even Johnny Cope himself did not learn the art of war in a single morning.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHINCOUGH PILGRIMAGE.

“ Man hath a weary pilgrimage
As through the world he wends :
On every stage from youth to age
Still discontent attends.
With heaviness he casts his eye
Upon the road before,
And still remembers with a sigh
The days that are no more.”—SOUTHEY.

Some folks having been bred up from their cradle to the writing of books, of course naturally do the thing regularly and scientifically ; but that's not to be expected from the like of me, that have followed no other way of life than the shaping and sewing line. It behoves me, therefore, to beg pardon for not being able to carry my history aye regularly straight forward, and for being forced whiles to zig-zag and vandyke. For instance, I clean forgot to give, in its proper place, a history of one of my travels, with Benjie in my bosom, in search of a cure for the chincough.

My son Benjie was, at this dividual time, between four and five years old, when—poor wee chieldie !—he took the chincough, and in more respects than one was not in a good way ; so the doctor recommended his mother and me, for the change of air, first to carry him down a coal-pit, and syne to the limekilns at Cousland.

The coal-pit I could not think of at all : to say nothing of the danger of swinging down into the bowels of the earth in a creel, the thing aye put me in mind of the awful place where the wicked, after death and judgment, howl, and hiss, and gnash their teeth ; and where, unless Heaven be more merciful than we are just, we may all be soon enough. So I could not think of that till other human means failed ; and I determined, in the first place, to hire Tammie Dobbie's cart, and try a smell of the fresh air about the limekilns.

It was a fine July forenoon, and the cart, filled with clean straw, was at the door by eleven o'clock ; so our wife handed us out a pair of blankets to hap round me, and syne little

Benjie into my arms, with his big-coatie on, and his leather cappie tied below his chin, and a bit red worsted comforterie round his neck ; for though the sun was warm and pleasant withal, we dreaded cold, as the doctor bade us. Oh, he was a fine old man, Doctor Hartshorn !

We had not well got out of the town, when Tammy Dobbie louped up on the fore-tram. He was a crouse, cantie auld cock, having seen much and not little in his day ; so he began a pleasant confab, pointing out all the gentlemen's houses round the country, and the names of the farms on the hillsides. To one like me, whose occupations tie him to the town-foot, it really is a sweet and grateful thing to be let loose, as it were, for a wee among the scenes of peace and quietness, where nature is in a way wild and wanton—where the clouds above our heads seem to sail along more grandly over the bosom of the sky, and the wee birds to cheep and churm, from the hedges among the fields, with greater pleasure, feeling that they are God's free creatures.

I cannot tell how many thoughts came over my mind, one after another, like the waves of the sea down on Musselburgh beach : but especially the days when I was a wee callant with a daidly at Dominie Duncan's school, were fresh in my mind as if the time had been but yesterday ; though much, much was I changed since then, being at that time a little, careless, ragged laddie, and now the head of a family, earning bread to my wife and wean by the sweat of my brow. I thought on the blythe summer days when I dandered about the braes and bushes seeking birds'-nests with Alick Bowsie and Samuel Search ; and of the time when we stood upon one another's backs, to speil up to the ripe cherries that hung over the garden walls of Woodburn. Awful changes had taken place since then. I had seen Sammy die of the black jaundice—an awful spectacle ! and poor Alick Bowsie married to a drucken randie, that wore the breeks, and did not allow the misfortunate creature the life of a dog.

When I was meditating thus, after the manner of the patriarch Isaac, there was a pleasant sadness at my heart, though it was like to loup to my mouth ; but I could not get leave to enjoy it long for the tongue of Tammie Dobbie. He bade me look over into a field, about the middle of which were some wooden railings round the black gaping mouth of

a coal-pit. "Div ye see that dark bit owre yonder amang the green clover, wi' the sticks about it?" asked Tammie.

"Yes," said I; "and what for?"

"Weel, do you ken," quo' Tammie, "that has been a weary place to mair than ane. Twa-three year ago, some o' the collyer bodies were choked to death down below wi' a blast o' foul air; and a pour o' orphan weans they left behint them on the cauldrie parish! But ye'll mind Horn-em, the sherry-officer with the thrawn shouter?"

"Ou, bravely; I believe he came to some untimous end hereaway about?"

"Just in that spat," answered Tammie. "He was a drucken, blustering chield, as ye mind, fearing neither man nor de'il, and living a wild, wicked, regardless life; but, puir man, that couldna aye last. He had been bousing about the countryside somehow—maybe harrying out of house and hald some puir bodies that hadna the wherewith to pay their rents; so, in riding hame fou—it was pitmirk, and the rain pouring down in bucketfu's—he became dumfounded wi' the darkness and the dramming thegither, and, losing his way, wandered about the fields, hauling his mare after him by the bridle. In the morning the beast was found nibbling away at the grass owre by yonder, wi' the saddle upon its back, and a broken bridle hinging down about its fore-legs, by the which the folks round were putten upon the scent; for, on making search down yon pit, he was fund at the bottom, wi' his brains smashed about him, and his legs and arms broken to chitters!"

"Save us," said I, "it makes a' my flesh grue."

"Weel it may," answered Tammie, "or the story's lost in the telling; for the collyers that fand him shook as if they had been seized wi' the ague. The dumb animal, ye observe, had far mair sense than him,—for, when his fitting gaed way, instead of following, it had plunged back; and the bit o' the bridle, that had broken, was still in his grup when they spied him with their lanterns."

"It was an awful like way to leave the world," said I.

"Deed it was; and nae less," answered Tammie, "to gang to his lang account in the middle of his mad thochtlessness, without a moment's warning. But see, yonder's Cousland lying right forrit to the east hand."

At this very nick of time Benjie was seized with a severe kink ; so Tammie stopped his cart, and I held his head owre the side of it till the cough went by. I thought his inside would have jumped out ; but he fell sound asleep in two or three minutes, and we jogged on till we came to the yill-house door, where, after louping out, we got a pickle pease-strae to Tammie's horse.

CHAPTER XIV.

MY LORD'S RACES.

" Aff they a' went galloping, galloping ;
Legs and arms a' walloping, walloping ;
De'il take the hindmost, quo' Duncan M'Calapin,
The laird o' Tillyben, joe."—*Old Song*.

" He went a little further,
And turned his head aside,
And just by Goodman Whitfield's gate,
Oh there the mare he spied.
He asked her how she did,
She stared him in the face,
Then down she laid her head again—
She was in wretched case."—*Old Poulter's Mare*.

It happened curiously that, of all the days of the year, this should have been the one on which the Carters'-play was held ; and, by good luck, we were just in time to see that grand sight. The whole regiment of carters were paraded up at my lord's door, for so they call their box-master ; and a beautiful thing it was, I can assure ye. What a sight of ribands was on the horses ! Many a crame must have been emptied ere such a number of manes and long tails could have been busked out. The beasts themselves, poor things, I dare say, wondered much at their bravery, and no less I am sure did the riders. They looked for all the world like living haberdashery shops. Great bunches of wallflower, thyme, spearmint, batchelor buttons, gardeners' gartens, peony roses, gillyflower, and southernwood, were stuck in their buttonholes ; and broad belts of striped silk, of every colour in the rainbow, were flung

across their shoulders. As to their hats, the man would have had a clear ee that could have kent what was their shape or colour. They were all rowed round with ribands, and puffed about the rim with long green or white feathers ; and cockades were stuck on the off side, to say nothing of long strips fleeing behind them in the wind like streamers. Save us ! to see men so proud of finery : if they had been peacocks, one would have thought less ; but in decent sober men, the heads of small families, and with no great wages, the thing was crazy like. Was it not ?

At long and last we saw them all set in motion, like a regiment of dragoons, two and two, with a drum and fife at their head, as if they had been marching to the field of battle. By the by, it was two of our own volunteer lads that were playing that day before them—Rory Skirl the snab, and Geordie Thump the dyer : so this, ye see, verified the old proverb, that travel where ye like, to the world's end, ye'll aye meet with kent faces,—Tammie and me coming out to the yill-house door to see them pass by.

Behind the drum and fife came a big, half-crazy-looking chield, with a broad blue bonnet on his head, and a red worsted cherry sticking in the crown of it. He was carrying a new car-saddle over his shoulder on a well-cleaned pitchfork. Syne came three abreast, one on each side of my lord, being the key-keepers ; he keeping the box, and they keeping the keys, in case like he should take anything out. And syne came the auld my lord—him that was my lord last year, ye observe ; and syne came the colours, as bright and bonny as mostly anything ye ever saw. On one of them was painted a plough and harrows, and a man sowing wheat ; over the top of which were gilded letters, the which I was able to read when I put on my specs, being, if I mind well, "Speed the Plough." On the other one, which was a mazarine blue with yellow fringes, was the picture of two carters, with flat bonnets on their heads, the tane with a whip in his hand, and the tither a rake, making hay like. Then came they all passing by, two and two, looking as if each one of them had been the Duke of Buccleuch himself, every one rigged out in his best ; the young callants, such like as had just entered the box, coming hindmost, and thinking themselves, I daresay, no small drink, and the day

a great one when they were first allowed to be art and part in such a grand procession.

But losh me ! I had mostly forgot the piper, that played in the middle, as proud as Hezekiah, that we read of in Second Kings, strutting about from side to side with his bare legs and big buckles, and bit Macgregor tartan jacket—his cheeks blown up with wind like a smith's bellows—the feathers dirling with conceit in his bonnet—and the drone, below his oter, squeeling and skirling like an evil spirit tied up in a green bag. Keep us all ! what gleys he gied about him to observe that the folk were looking at him ! He put me in mind of the song that old Barny used to sing about the streets—

“ Ilka ane his sword and dirk has,
Ilka ane as proud's a Turk is ;
There's the Grants o' Tullochgorum,
Wi' their pipers gaun before 'em ;
Proud the mithers are that bore 'em.
Feedle, faddle, fa, fum.”

But who do ye think should come up to us at this blessed moment, with a staff in his hand, being old now, and not able to ride in the procession, as he had many a time and often done before, but honest Saunders Tram, that had been a staunch customer of mine since the day on which I opened shop, and to whom I had made countless pairs of corduroy spatterdashes ; so we shook hands jocosely together, like old acquaintances, and the body hodged and leuch as if he had found a fiddle, he was so glad to see me.

Benjie having fallen asleep, Luckie Barm of the Change, a dounce woman, put him to his bed, and promised to take care of him till we came back ; Saunders Tram insisting on us to go forward along with him to see the race. I had no great scruple to do this, as I thought Benjie would likely sleep for an hour, being wearied with the joogling of the cart, and having supped a mutchkin bowlful of Luckie Barm's broo and bread.

By the time we had tramped on to the braehead, two or three had booked for the race, and were busy pulling away the flowers that hung over about their horses' lugs, to say little of the tapes and twine ; and which made them look, poor brutes, as if they were not very sure what was the

matter with them. Meanwhile, there was a terrible uproar between my lord and a man from Edinburgh Grassmarket, leading a limping horse, covered with a dirty sheet, with two holes for the beast's een looking out at.

But, for all this outward care, the poor thing seemed very like as if wind was more plenty in the land than corn, being thin and starved-looking, and as lame as Vulcan in the off hind-leg. So ye see the managers of the box insisted on its not running; and the man said "it had a right to run as well as any other horse;" and my lord said "it had no such thing, as it was not in the box;" and the man said "he would take out a protest;" and my lord said "he didna gie a bawbee for a protest; and that he would not allow him to run on any account whatsoever:" but the man was throng all the time they were argle-bargling taking the cover off the beast's back, that was ready saddled, and as accoutred for running as our regiment of volunteers was for fighting on field-days. So he swore like a trooper that, notwithstanding all their debarring, he would run in spite of their teeth—both my lord's teeth, ye observe, and that of the two key-keepers;—maybe, too, of the man that carried the saddle, for he aye lent in a word at my lord's back, egging him on to stand out for the laws to the last drop of his blood.

To cut a long tale short, the drum ruffed, and off set four of them, a black one, and a white one, and a brown one, and the man's one, neck and neck, as neat as you like. The racecourse was along the highroad; and, dog on it, they made a noise like thunder, throwing out their big heavy feet behind them, and whisking their tails from side to side as if they would have dung out one another's een; till, not being used to gallop, they at last began to funk and fling; syne first one stopping, and then another, wheeling round and round about like peeries, in spite of the riders whipping them, and pulling them by the heads. The man's mare, however, from the Grassmarket, with the limping leg, carried on, followed by the white one, an old tough brute that had belonged in its youth to a trumpeter of the Scots Greys; and, to tell the truth, it showed mettle still, though far past its best: so back they came, neck and neck, all the folk crying, and holloing, and clapping their hands—some "Weel dune the lame ane—five shillings on the lame ane;"

—and others, “Weel run, Bonaparte—at him, auld Bonaparte,—two to one that Whitey beats him all to sticks,”—when, dismal to relate, the limping-legged ane couped the creels, and old white Bonaparte came in with his tail cocked, amid loud cheering and no small clapping of hands.

We all ran down the road to the place where the limping horse was lying, for it was never like to rise up again any more than the bit rider, that was thrown over its head like an arrow out of a bow ; but on helping him to his feet, save and except the fright, two wide screeds across his trowser-knees, and a scratch along the brig of his nose, nothing visible was to be perceived. It was different, however, with the limping horse. Misfortunate brute ! one of its fore-legs had folded below it, and snapped through at the fetlock joint. There was it lying with a sad sorrowful look, as if it longed for death to come quick and end its miseries, the blood all the while gush-gushing out at the gaping wound. To all it was as plain as the A, B, C, that the bones would never knit ; and that, considering the case it was in, it would be an act of Christian charity to put the beast out of pain. The maister gloomed, stroked his chin, and looked down, knowing, weel-a-wat, that he had lost his breadwinner, then gave his head a nod, nod—thrusting both his hands down to the bottom lining of the pockets of his long square-tailed jockey-coat. He was a wauf, hallanshaker-looking chield, with an old broad-snouted japanned beaver hat pulled over his brow—one that seemed by his phisog to hold the good word of the world as nothing, and that had, in the course of circumstances, been reduced to a kind of wild desperation, either by chance-misfortunes, cares and trials, or, what is more likely, by his own sinful, regardless way of life.

“It canna be helpit,” he said, giving his head a bit shake ; “it canna be helpit, friends. Ay, Jess, ye were a gude ane in yere day, lass,—mony a penny and pound have I made out of ye. Which o’ ye can lend me a hand, lads ? Rin away for a gun some o’ ye.”

Here Thomas Clod interfered with a small bit of advice—a thing that Thomas was good at, being a Cameronian elder, and accustomed to giving a word. “Wad ye no think it better,” said Thomas, “to stick her with a long gully-knife,

or a sharp shoemaker's parer? It wad be an easier way, I'm thinking."

Dog on it! I could scarcely keep from shuddering when I heard them speaking in this wild, heathenish, bloody sort of a manner.

"Deed no," quod Saunders Tram, at whose side I was standing; "far better send away for the smith's forehammer, and hit her a smack or twa betwixt the een; so ye wad settle her in half a second."

"No, no," cried Tammie Dobbie, lending in his word; "a better plan than a' that wad be to make a strong kinch of ropes and hang her."

Lovey ding! such ways of showing how to be merciful!! But the old jockey himself interfered. "Haud yere tongues, fules," was his speech; "yonder's the man coming wi' a gun. We'll shune put an end to her. She would have won for a hunder pounds, if she hadna broken her leg. Wha'll wager me that she wadna hae won? But she's the last of my stable, puir beast; and I havena ae plack to rub against anither, now that I have lost her. Gi'e me the gun and the penny candle. Is she loaded?" speired he at the man that carried the piece.

"Troth is she," was the answer,— "double-charged."

"Then stand back, lads," quod the old round-shouthered horse-couper; and ramming down the candle, he lifted up the piece, cocking it as he went four or five yards in front of the poor bleeding brute, that seemed, though she could not rise, to know what he was about with the weapon of destruction, casting her black eye up at him, and looking pitifully in his face.

When I saw him taking his aim and preparing to draw the trigger, I turned round my back, not being able to stand it, and brizzed the flats of my hands with all my pith against the opening of my ears: nevertheless, I heard a faint boom; so, heeling round, I observed the miserable bleeding creature lift her head, and pulling up her legs, give them a plunge down again on the divots; after which she lay still, and we all saw, to our satisfaction, that death had come to her relief.

We are not commanded to be the judges of our fellow-creatures, but to think charitably of all men, hoping every-

thing for the best ; and though the horse-couper was a thought suspicious, both in look, speech, dress, and outward behaviour, still, ever and anon, we were bound by the ten commandments to consider him only in the light of a fellow-mortal in distress of mind and poverty of pocket : so we made a superscription for the poor man ; and though he did not look much like one that deserved our charity, nevertheless and howsoever, maybe he was a bad halfpenny, and maybe not ; yet one thing was visibly certain, that he was as poor as Job—misery being written in big-hand letters on his brow. So it behoved each one to open his purse as he could afford it ; and though I say not what I put into the hat, proud am I to tell that he collected two or three shillings to help him home.

This job being over to his mind as well as mine, and the money safely stowed into his big hinder coat-pocket—would ye believe it ? ere yet the beast was scarcely cold, just as we were decamping from the place, and buttoning up our breeches-pockets, we saw him casting his coat, and had the curiosity to stand still for a jiffy, to observe what he was after, in case, in the middle of his misfortunes, he was bent on some act of desperation ; when, lo and behold ! he out with a gully-knife, and began skinning his old servant, as if he had been only peeling the bark off a fallen tree !

One cannot sit at their ingle-cheek and expect, without casting their eyes about them, to grow experienced in the ways of men or the ongoings of the world. This spectacle gave me, I can assure you, much and no little insight ; and so dowie was I with the thoughts of what I had witnessed of the selfishness, the sinfulness, and perversity of man, that I grew more and more home-sick, thinking never so much in my life before of my quiet hearthstone and cheerful ingle ; and though Thomas Clod insisted greatly on my staying to their head-meeting dinner, and taking a reel with the lassies in the barn ; and Tammie Dobbie, the bit body, had got so much into the spirit of the thing, that little persuasion would have made him stay all night and reel till the dawning,—yet I was determined to make the best of my way home ; more be token, as Benjie might take skaith from the night air, and our jaunt therefrom might, instead of contributing to his welfare, do him more harm than good. So, after

getting some cheese and bread, to say nothing of a glass or two of strong beer and a dram at Luckie Barm's, we waited in her parlour, which was hung round with most beautiful pictures of Joseph and his Brethren, besides two stucco parrots on the chimney-piece, amusing ourselves with looking at them, as a pastime like, till Benjie wakened ; on the which I made Tammie yoke his beast, and rowing the bit callant in his mother's shawl, took him into my arms in the cart, and, after shaking hands with all and sundry twice or thrice over, we bade them a "good night," and drove away.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RETURN.

" That sweet home is their delight,
And thither they repair,
Communion with their own to hold !
Peaceful as, at the fall of night,
Two little lambkins gliding white
Return unto the gentle air,
That sleeps within the fold.
Or like two birds to their lonely nest,
Or wearied waves to their bay of rest,
Or fleecy clouds when their race is run,
That hang in their own beauty blest,
'Mid the calm that sanctifies the west
Around the setting sun."—WILSON.

I may confess, without thinking shame, that I was glad when I found our nebs turned homeward ; and, when we got over the turn of the brae at the old quarry-holes, to see the blue smoke of our own Dalkeith hanging like a thin cloud over the tops of the green trees, through which I perceived the glittering weathercock on the old kirk steeple. Tammie, poor creature, I observed, was a whit ree with the good cheer ; and as he sat on the fore-tram, with his whip-hand thrown over the beast's haunches, he sang, half to himself and half aloud, a great many old Scotch songs, such as "The Gaberlunzie," "Aiken Drum," "Tak' yere Auld Cloak about Ye," and "the Deuk's dang ower my Daddie ;" besides

"The Mucking o' Geordie's Byre," and "Ca' the Ewes to the Knowes," and so on ; but do what I liked, I could not keep my spirits up, thinking of the woful end of the poor old horse, and of the ne'er-do-weel loon its master. Many an excellent instruction of Mr Wiggie's came to my mind, of how we misguided the good things that were lent us for our use here, by a gracious Provider, who would, however, bid us render a final account to Him of our conduct and conversation. I thought of how many were aye complaining and complaining, myself whiles among the rest, of the hardships, the miseries, and the misfortunes of their lot ; putting all down to the score of fate, and never once thinking of the plantations of sorrow reared up from the seeds of our own sinfulness—or how anything, save punishment, could come of the breaking of the ten commandments delivered to the patriarch Moses. Perhaps, reckoned I with myself,—perhaps in this, even I myself may have in this day's transactions erred. Here am I wandering about in a cart, exposing myself to the defilement of the world, to the fear of robbers and to the night air, in the search of health for a dwinning laddie, as if the hand that dealt that blessing out was not as powerful at home as it is abroad. Had I remained at my own lapbroad, the profits of my day's work would have been over and above for the maintenance of my family, outside and inside ; instead of which, I have been at the expense of a cart-hire and a horse's up-putting, let alone Tammie's debosh and my own, besides the trifle of threepence to the round-shouldered old horse-couper with the slouched japan beaver hat. The story was too true a one ; but, alack-a-day, it was now over-late to repent !

As I was thus musing, the bright red sun of summer sank down behind the top of the Pentland Hills, and all looked bluish, dowie, and dreary, as if the heart of the world had been seized with a sudden dwalm, and the face of nature had at once withered from blooming youth into the hoariness of old age. Now and then the birds gave a bit chitter ; and whiles a cow mooed from the fields ; and the dew was falling like the little tears of the fairies out of the blue lift, where the gloaming-star soon began to glow and glitter bonnily.

What I had seen and witnessed made my thoughts heavy

and my heart sad; I could not get the better of it. I looked round and round me, as we jogged along over the height, down on the far distant country, that spread out as if it had been a great big picture, with hills, and fields, and woods; and I could still see to the norward the ships lying at their anchors on the sea, and the shores of Fife far, far beyond it. It was a great and a grand sight, and made me turn from the looking at it into my own heart, causing me to think more and more of the glory of the Maker's handi-works, and less and less of the littleness of prideful man. But Tammie had gotten his drappikie, and the tongue of the body would not lie still a moment; so he blethered on from one thing to another as we jogged along, till I was forced at the last to give up thinking, and begin a twa-handed crack with him.

"Have you your snuff-box upon ye?" said Tammie. "Gi'e me a pinch."

Having given him the box, I observed to him that "it was beginning to grow dark and dowie."

"'Deed is't," said Tammie; "but a body can now scarcely meet on the road wi' onything waur than themself. Mony a witch, de'il, and bogle, however, did my grannie see and hear tell of, that used to scud and scamper hereaway langsyne like maukins."

"Witches!" quo' I. "No, no, Tammie, all these things are out of the land now; and muckle luck to them. But we have other things to fear; what think ye of highway robbers?"

"Highway robbers!" said Tammie. "Kay, kay; I'll tell ye of something that I met in wi' mysell. Ae dark winter night, as I was daundering hame frae Pathhead,—it was pitmirk, and about the twall—losh me, I couldna see my finger afore me!—that a stupid thocht cam into my head that I wad never wun hame, but be either killed, lost, murdered, or drowned, between that and the dawing. All o' a sudden I sees a light coming dancing forrit amang the trees, and my hair began to stand up on end. Then, in the next moment—save us a'!—I sees anither light; and forrit, forrit they baith cam, like the een of some great fiery monster, let loose frae the pit o' darkness by its maister, to seek whom it might devour."

"Stop, Tammie," said I to him, "ye'll wauken Benjie. How far are we from Dalkeith?"

"Twa mile and a bittock," answered Tammie. "But wait a wee. Up cam the two lights snoov-snooving, nearer and nearer; and I heard distinctly the sound of feet that werena men's—cloven feet, maybe—but nae wheels. Sae nearer it cam and nearer, till the sweat began to pour owre my een as cauld as ice; and, at lang and last, I fand my knees beginning to gi'e way; and, after tot-tottering for half a minute, I fell down, my staff playing bleach out before me. When I cam to mysell, and opened my een, there were the twa lights before me, bleez-bleezing, as if they wad blast my sight out. And what did they turn out to be, think ye? The de'il or spunkie, whilk o' them?"

"I'm sure I canna tell," said I.

"Naething mair then," answered Tammie, "but twa bowets, ane tied to ilka knee of auld Doofie, the half-crazy horse-doctor, mounted on his lang-tailed naig, and away through the dark by himsell, at the dead hour o' night, to the relief of a man's mare seized with the batts, somewhere down about Oxenford."

I was glad that Tammie's story had ended in this way, when out came another tramping on its heels.

"Do you see the top of yon black trees to the eastward there, on the braehead?"

"I think I do," was my reply. "But how far, think ye, are we from home now?"

"About a mile and a half," said Tammie. "Weel, as to the trees, I'll tell ye something about them.

"There was an auld widow-leddy lived langsyne about the town-end of Dalkeith. A sour, cankered, curious body—she's dead and rotten lang ago. But what I was gaun to say, she had a bonny bit fair-haired, blue-ee'd lassie of a servant-maid that lodged in the house wi' her, just by all the world like a lamb wi' a wolf—a bonnier quean, I've heard tell, never steppit in leather shoon: so all the young lads in the Gate-end were wooing at her, and fain to have her; but she wad only have ae joe for a' that. He was a journeyman wright, a trades-lad, and they had come, three or four year before, frae the same place thegither—maybe having had a liking for ane anither since they were

bairns; so they were gaun to be married the week after Da'keith Fair, and a' was settled. But what, think ye, happened? He got a drap drink, and a recruiting-party listed him in the king's name, wi' pitting a white shilling in his loof.

"When the poor lassie heard what had come to pass, and how her sweetheart had ta'en the bounty, she was like to gang distrackit, and took to her bed. The doctor never took up her trouble; and some said it was a fever. At last she was roused out o't, but naebody ever saw her laugh after; and frae ane that was as cantie as a lintie, she became as douce as a Quaker, though she aye gaed cannily about her wark, as if amaisht naething had happened. If she was ony way light-headed before, to be sure she wasna that noo, but just what a decent quean should be, sitting for hours by the kitchen fire her lane, reading the Bible, and thinking, wha kens, of what wad become o' the wicked after they died; and so ye see——"

"What light is yon?" said I, interrupting him, wishing him like to break off.

"Ou, it's just the light on some of the coal-hills. The puir blackened creatures will be gaun down to their wark. It's an unyearthly kind of trade, turning night intil day, and working like moudiewarts in the dark, when decent folks are in their beds sleeping. And so, as I was saying, ye see, it happened ae Sunday night that a chap cam to the back door; and the mistress too heard it. She was sitting in the foreroom wi' her specs on, reading some sermon book; but it was the maid that answered.

"In a while thereafter she rang her bell, being a curious body, and aye anxious to ken a' thing of her ain affairs, let alane her neighbours': so, after waiting a wee, she rang again,—and better rang; then lifting up her stick, for she was stiff with the rheumaticks and decay of nature, she hirpled into the kitchen,—but feint a hait saw she there, save the open Bible lying on the table, the cat streekit out before the fire, and the candle burning—the candle—na, I daursay I am wrang there; I believe it was a lamp, for she was a near ane. As for her maiden, there was no trace of her."

"What do ye think came owre her then?" said I to him,

liking to be at my wits' end. "Naething uncanny, I daur-say?"

"Ye'll hear in a moment," answered Tammie, "a' that I ken o' the matter. Ye see—as I asked ye before—yon trees on the hill-head to the eastward, just below yon black cloud yonder?"

"Preceesely," said I—"I see them well enough."

"Weel, after a' thochts of finding her were gi'en up, and it was fairly concluded that it was the auld gudeman that had come and chappit her out, she was fund in a pond among yon trees, floating on her back, wi' her Sunday claes on!!"

"Drowned?" said I to him.

"Drowned—and as stiff as a deal board," answered Tammie. "But when she was drowned—or how she came to be drowned—or who it was drowned her—has never been found out to this blessed moment."

"Maybe," said I, lending in my word—"maybe she had grown demented, and thrown herself in i' the dark."

"Or maybe," said Tammie, "the de'il flew away wi' her in a flash o' fire, and, soosing her down frae the lift, she landit in that hole, where she was fund floating. But—wo!—wo!" cried he to his horse, coming across its side with his whip—"we maun be canny; for this brig has a sharp turn [it was the Cow Brig, ye know], and many a one, both horse and man, have got their necks broken by not being wary enough of that corner."

This made me a thought timorous, having the bit laddie Benjie fast asleep in my arms, and as I saw that Tammie's horse was a wee fidgety, and glad, I daresay, poor thing, to find itself so near home. We heard the water, far down below, roaring and hushing over the rocks, and thro' among the Duke's woods—big, thick, black trees, that threw their branches, like giants' arms, half across the Esk, making all below as gloomy as midnight; while over the tops of them, high, high aboon, the bonnie wee starries were twink-twinkling far amid the blue. But there was no end to Tammie's tongue.

"Weel," said he, "speaking o' the brig, I'll tell you a gude story about that. Auld Jamie Bowie, the potato-merchant, that lived at the Gate-end, had a horse and cart that

met wi' an accident just at the turn o' the corner yonder ; and up cam a chield, sair forfaughten and a' out of breath, to Jamie's door, crying like the prophet Jeremiah to the auld Jews, 'Rin, rin away down to the Cow Brig, for your cart's dung to shivers, and the driver's killed, as weel as the horse !'

"James ran in for his hat ; but, as he was coming out at the door, he met another messenger, such as came running across the plain to David to acquaint him of the death of Absalom, crying, 'Rin away down, Jamie, rin away down ; your cart is standing yonder, without either horse or driver, for they're baith killed !'

"Jamie thanked Heaven that the cart was to the fore ; then, rinning back for his stick, which he had forgotten, he stopped a moment to bid his wife not greet so loud, and was then rushing out in full birr, when he ran foul of a third chield, that mostly knocked down the door in his hurry. 'Awfu' news, man, awfu' news,' was the way o't with this second Eliphaz the Temanite. 'Your cart and horse ran away, and threw the driver, puir fellow, clean owre the brig into the water. No a crunch o' him is to be seen or heard tell of, for he was a' smashed to pieces !! It's an awfu' business !'

"'But where's the horse ? and where's the cart, then ?' askit Jamie, a thought brisker. 'Where's the horse and cart, then, my man ? Can ye tell me ought of that ?'

"'Ou,' said he, 'they're baith doun at the Toll yonder, no a hair the waur.'

"'That's the best news I've heard the nicht, my man. Goodwife,—I say, goodwife, are ye deaf or a mart ? Give this lad a dram ; and as it rather looks like a hower, I'll e'en no go out the night. I'll easily manage to find another driver, though half a hundred o' the blockheads should get their brains knocked out.'

"'Is not that a gude ane noo ?' quo' Tammie, laughing. "'Od, Jamie Bowie was a real ane. He wadna let them light a candle by his bedside to let him see to dee ; he gied them a curse, and said that was needless extravagance."

Dog on it, thought I to myself, the further in the deeper ! This beats the round-shouldered horse-couper with the japan hat, skinning his reeking horse, all to sticks ; and

so I again fell into a gloomy sort of a musing, when, just as we came opposite the Duke's gate, with the deers on each side of it, two men rushed out upon us, and one of them seized Tammie's horse by the bridle, as the other one held his horse-pistol to my nose, and bade me stop in the King's name !

"Hold your hand, hold your hand, for the sake of mercy !" cried I. "Spare the father of a small family that will starve on the street if ye take my life !! Hae—hae—there's every coin and copper I have about me in the world ! Be merciful, be merciful ; and do not shed blood, that will not, cannot be rubbed out of your conscience. Take all that we have—horse and cart and all if ye like ; only spare our lives, and let us away home !"

"De'il's in the man," quo' Tammie, "horse and cart ! that's a gude ane ! Na, na, lads ; fire away gin ye like ; for as lang as I hae a drap o' bluid in me, ye'll get neither. Better be killed than starve. Do your best, ye thieves that ye are ; and I'll hae baith of ye hanged neist week before the Fifteen !"

Every moment I expected my head to be shot off, till I got my hand clapped on Tammie's mouth, and could get cried to them—"Shoot him then, lads ; shoot him then, lads, if he wants it ; but take my siller like Christians, and let me away with my poor deeing bairn !"

The two men seemed a something dumfounded with what they heard ; and I began to think them, if they were highway robbers, a wee slow at their trade ; when, what think ye did they turn out to be—only guess ? Nothing more nor less than two excise officers, that had got information of some smuggled gin, coming up in a cart from Fisherrow harbour, and were lurking on the roadside, looking out for spuillzie !!

When they quitted us giggling, I could not keep from laughing too ; though the sights I had seen, and the fright I had got, made me nervish and eerie ; so blithe was I when the cart rattled on our own street, and I began to waken Benjie, as we were not above a hundred yards from our own door.

In this day's adventures I saw the sin and folly of my conduct visibly, as I jumped out of the cart at our close

mouth. So I determined within myself, with a strong determination, to behave more sensibly for the future, and think no more about lime-kilns and coal-pits; but to trust, for Benjie's recovery from the chincough, to a kind Providence, together with Daffy's elixir and warm blankets.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BLOODY CARTRIDGE.

"So stands the Thracian herdsman with his spear
Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear;
And hears him in the rustling wood, and sees
His course at distance by the bending trees;
And thinks—Here comes my mortal enemy,
And either he must fall in fight or I."

—DRYDEN'S *Palamon and Arcite*.

"Nay, never shake thy gory locks at me;
Thou canst not say I did it!"—*Macbeth*.

It was on a fine summer morning, somewhere about four o'clock, when I wakened from my night's rest, and was about thinking to bestir myself, that I heard the sound of voices in the kail-yard stretching south from our back windows. I listened—and I listened—and I better listened—and still the sound of the argle-bargling became more distinct, now in a fleecing way, and now in harsh angry tones, as if some quarrelsome disagreement had taken place. I had not the comfort of my wife's company in this dilemma, —she being away, three days before, on the top of Tammy Trundle the carrier's cart, to Landar, on a visit to her folks there; her mother (my gudemother like) having been for some time ill with an income in her leg, which threatened to make a lameter of her in her old age, the two doctors there—not speaking of the blacksmith, and sundry skeely old women—being able to make nothing of the business; so nobody happened to be with me in the room saving wee Benjie, who was lying asleep at the back of the bed, with his little Kilmarnock on his head, as sound as a top. Nevertheless, I looked for my clothes; and, opening one half of

the window shutter, I saw four young birkies, well dressed—indeed three of them customers of my own—all belonging to the town; two of them young doctors, one of them a writer's clerk, and the other a grocer. The whole appeared very fierce and fearsome, like turkey-cocks; swaggering about with warlike arms as if they had been the king's dragoons; and priming a pair of pistols, which one of the surgeons, a spirity, outspoken lad, Maister Blister, was holding in his grip.

I jealoused at once what they were after, being now a wee up to firearms; so I saw that scaith was to come of it, and that I would be wanting in my duty on four heads,—first, as a Christian; second, as a man; third, as a subject; and fourth, as a father,—if I withheld myself from the scene, nor lifted up my voice, however fruitlessly, against such crying iniquity as the wanton letting out of human blood; so forth I hastened, half dressed, with my grey stockings rolled up my thighs over my corduroys, and my old hat above my cowl, to the kail-yard of contention.

I was just in the nick of time; and my presence checked the effusion of blood for a little—but wait a wee. So high and furious were at least three of the party, that I saw it was catching water in a sieve to waste words on them, knowing as clearly as the sun serves the world, that interceding would be of no avail. Howsoever, I made a feint, and threatened to bowl away for a magistrate, if they would not desist from their barbarous and bloody purpose; but, i'fegs, I had better kept my counsel till it was asked for.

“Tailor Mansie,” blustered out Maister Thomas Blister, with a furious cock of his eye—he was a queer Eirish birkie, come over for his education—“since ye have ventured to thrust your nose, ma vourneen,” said he, “where nobody invited ye, you must just stay,” added he, “and abide by the consequences. This is an affair of honour, you take, don't ye? and if ye venture to stir one foot from the spot, och then, ma bouchal,” said he, “by the poker of St Patrick, but whisk through ye goes one of these leaden playthings, as sure as ye ever spoiled a coat or cabbaged broadcloth! Ye have now come out, ye observe,—hark ye,” said he, “and are art and part in the business; and if one, or both, of the principals be killed, poor devils,” said he, “we

are all alike liable to take our trial before the Justiciary Court, hark ye ; and by the powers," said he, "I doubt not but, on proper consideration, machree, that they will allow us to get off mercifully, on this side of swinging, by a verdict of manslaughter—and be hanged to them !"

'Od, I found myself immediately in a scrape ; but how to get out of it baffled my gumption. It set me all a shivering ; yet I thought that, come the worst when it should, they surely would not hang the father of a helpless small family, that had nothing but his needle for their support, if I made a proper affidavit, about having tried to make peace between the youths. So, conscience being a brave supporter, I abode in silence, though not without many queer and qualmish thoughts, and a pit-patting of the heart, not unco pleasant in the tholing.

"Blood and wounds !" bawled Maister Thomas Blister, "it would be a disgrace for ever on the honourable profession of physic," egging on poor Maister Willy Magneezhy, whose face was as white as double-bleached linen, "to make an apology for such an insult. Arrah, my honey ! you not fit to doctor a cat,—you not fit to bleed a calf,—you not fit to poultice a pig,—after three years' apprenticeship," said he, "and a winter with Doctor Monro ? By the cupping-glasses of 'Pocrates," said he, "and by the pistol of Gallon, but I would have caned him on the spot if he had just let out half as much to me ! Look ye, man," said ye—"look ye, man, he is all shaking" (this was a God's truth) ; "he'll turn tail. At him like fire, Willie."

Magneezhy, though sadly frightened, looked a thought brighter, and made a kind of half step forward. "Say that ye'll ask my pardon once more,—and if not," whined the poor lad, with a voice broken and trembling, "then we must just shoot one another."

"Devil a bit," answered Maister Bloatsheet—"devil a bit. No, sir ; you must down on your bare knees, and beg ten thousand pardons for calling me out here, in a raw morning ; or I'll have a shot at you, whether you will or not."

"Will you stand that ?" said Blister, with eyes like burning coals. "By the living jingo, and the holy poker, Magneezhy, if you stand that,—if you stand that, I say, I stand no longer your second, but leave you to disgrace and

a caning. If he likes to shoot you like a dog, and not as a gentleman, then, cuishla machree,—let him do it, and be done !”

“No, sir,” replied Magneezhy, with a quivering voice, which he tried in vain, poor fellow, to render warlike (he had never been in the volunteers like me). “Hand us the pistols, then, and let us do or die !”

“Spoken like a hero, and brother of the lancet : as little afraid at the sight of your own blood as at that of your patients,” said Blister. “Hand over the pistols.”

It was an awful business. Gude save us, such goings on in a Christian land ! While Mr Bloatsheet, the young writer, was in the act of cocking the bloody weapon, I again, but to no purpose, endeavoured to slip in a word edgeways. Magneezhy was in an awful case ; if he had been already shot, he could not have looked more clay and corpse-like ; so I took up a douce earnest confabulation, while the stramash was drawing to a bloody conclusion, with Mr Harry Molasses, the fourth in the spree, who was standing behind Bloatsheet with a large mahogany box under his arm, something in shape like that of a licensed packman, ganging about from house to house, through the country-side, selling toys and trinkets, or niffing plaited ear-rings, and suchlike, with young lasses, for old silver coins or cracked teaspoons.

“Oh !” answered he, very composedly, as if it had been a canister full of black-rapee or black-guard, that he had just lifted down from his top-shelf, “it’s just Doctor Blister’s saws, whittles, and big knives, in case any of their legs or arms be blown away, that he may cut them off.” Little would have prevented me sinking down through the ground, had I not remembered at the preceese moment that I myself was a soldier, and liable, when the hour of danger threatened, to be called out, in marching order, to the field of battle. But by this time the pistols were in the hands of the two infatuated young men, Mr Bloatsheet, as fierce as a hussar dragoon, and Magneezhy as supple in the knees as if he was all on oiled hinges ; so the next consideration was to get well out of the way, the lookers-on running nearly as great a chance of being shot as the principals, they not being accustomed, like me for instance, to the use

of arms; on which account I scougged myself behind a big pear-tree,—both being to fire when Blister gave the word “Off!”

I had scarcely jouked into my hidy-hole, when “crack—crack” played the pistols like lightning; and as soon as I got my cowl taken from my eyes and looked about, woes me! I saw Magneezhy clap his hand to his brow, wheel round like a peerie, or a sheep seized with the sturdie, and then play flap down on his broadside, breaking the necks of half a dozen cabbage-stocks—three of which were afterwards clean lost, as we could not put them all into the pot at one time. The whole of us ran forward, but foremost was Bloatsheet, who, seizing Magneezhy by the hand, cried, with a mournful face, “I hope you forgive me? Only say this as long as you have breath, for I am off to Leith harbour in half a minute.”

The blood was running over poor Magneezhy’s eyes, and drib-dribbling from the neb of his nose, so he was truly in a pitiful state; but he said with more strength than I thought he could have mustered,—“Yes, yes, fly for your life. I am dying without much pain—fly for your life, for I am a gone man!”

Bloatsheet bounced through the kail-yard like a maukin, clamb over the bit wall, and off like mad; while Blister was feeling Magneezhy’s pulse with one hand, and looking at his doctor’s watch, which he had in the other. “Do ye think that the poor lad will live, doctor?” said I to him.

He gave his head a wise shake, and only observed, “I daresay it will be a hanging business among us. In what direction do you think, Mansie, we should all take flight?”

But I answered bravely, “Flee them that will, I’se flee nane. If I am taken prisoner, the town-officers maun haul me from my own house; but, nevertheless, I trust the visibility of my innocence will be as plain as a pikestaff to the eyes of the Fifteen!”

“What, then, Mansie, will we do with poor Magneezhy? Give us your advice in need.”

“Let us carry him down to my own bed,” answered I; “I would not desert a fellow-creature in his dying hour! Help me down with him, and then flee the country as fast as you are able!”

We immediately proceeded, and lifted the poor lad, who had, now dwalmed away, upon our wife's hand-barrow—Blister taking the feet, and me the oxters, whereby I got my waistcoat all japanned with blood; so, when we got him laid right, we proceeded to carry him between us down the close, just as if he had been a sticked sheep, and in at the back door, which cost us some trouble, being narrow, and the barrow getting jammed in; but, at long and last, we got him streaked out above the blankets, having previously shoooken Benjie, and wakened him out of his morning's nap.

All this being accomplished and got over, Blister decamped, leaving me my leeful lane, excepting Benjie, who was next to nobody, in the house with the dying man. What a frightful face he had, all smeared over with blood and powder—and I really jealoused, that if he died in that room it would be haunted for evermair, he being in a manner a murdered man; so that, even should I be acquitted of art and part, his ghost might still come to bother us, making our house a hell upon earth, and frightening us out of our seven senses. But in the midst of my dreadful surmises, when all was still, so that you might have heard a pin fall, a knock-knock-knock came to the door, on which, recovering my senses, I dreaded first that it was the death-chap, and syne that the affair had got wind, and that it was the beagles come in search of me; so I kissed little Benjie, who was sitting on his creepie, blubbering and greeting for his parritch, while a tear stood in my own eye as I went forward to lift the sneck to let the officers, as I thought, harrie our house, by carrying off me, its master; but it was, thank Heaven, only Tammie Bodkin, coming in whistling to his work, with some measuring papers hanging round his neck.

“Ah, Tammie,” said I to him, my heart warming at a kent face, and making the laddie, although my bounden servant by a regular indenture of five years, a friend in my need, “come in, my man. I fear ye'll hae to take charge of the business for some time to come; mind what I tell'd ye about the shaping and the cutting, and no making the goose ower warm; as I doubt I am about to be harled away to the tolbooth.”

Tammie's heart swelled to his mouth. “Ah, maister,” he

said, "ye're joking. What should ye have done that ye should be ta'en to sic an ill place?"

"Ay, Tammie, lad," answered I, "it is but ower true."

"Weel, weel," quo' Tammie—I really thought it a great deal of the laddie—"weel, weel, they canna prevent me coming to sew beside ye; and if I can take the measure of customers without, ye can cut the claith within. But what is't for, maister?"

"Come in here," said I to him, "and believe your ain een, Tammie, my man."

"Losh me!" cried the poor laddie, glowing at the bloody face of the man in the bed, and starting back on his tip-toes. "Ay—ay—ay! maister; save us, maister; ay—ay—ay—you have na cloured his harnpan with the guse? Ay, maister, maister! whaten an unearthy sight!! I doubt they'll hang us a': you for doing't—and me on suspicion—and Benjie as art and part, puir thing! But I'll rin for a doctor. Will I, maister?"

The thought had never struck me before, being in a sort of a manner dung stupid; but catching up the word, I said with all my pith and birr, "Rin, rin, Tammie—rin for life and death!"

Tammie bolted like a nine-year-old, never looking behind his tail; so in less than ten minutes he returned, hauling along old Doctor Peelbox, whom he had waukened out of his bed, in a camblet morning-gown and a pair of red slippers, by the lug and horn, at the very time I was trying to quiet young Benjie, who was following me up and down the house, as I was pacing to and fro in distraction, girning and whingeing for his breakfast.

"Bad business, bad business; bless us, what is this?" said the old Doctor, who was near-sighted, staring at Magneezhy's bloody face through his silver spectacles—"what's the matter?"

The poor patient knew at once his master's tongue, and lifting up one of his eyes, the other being stiff and barked down, said in a melancholy voice, "Ah, master, do you think I'll get better?"

Doctor Peelbox, old man as he was, started back as if he had been a French dancing-master, or had stramped on a hot bar of iron. "Tom, Tom, is this you? what, in the name of

wonder, has done this?" Then feeling his wrist—"but your pulse is quite good. Have you fallen, boy? Where is the blood coming from?"

"Somewhere about the hairy scalp," answered Magneezhy, in their own queer sort of lingo. "I doubt some artery's cut through."

The Doctor immediately bade him lie quiet and hush, as he was getting a needle and silken thread ready to sew it up, ordering me to have a basin and water ready to wash the poor lad's physog. I did so as hard as I was able, though I was not sure about the blood just,—old Doctor Peelbox watching over my shoulder with a lighted penny candle in one hand, and the needle and thread in the other, to see where the blood spouted from. But we were as daft as wise; so he bade me take my big shears, and cut out all the hair on the fore-part of the head as bare as my loof—and syne we washed, and better washed; so Magneezhy got the other eye up, when the barked blood was loosed—looking, though as pale as a clean shirt, more frightened than hurt—until it became plain to us all, first to the Doctor, syne to me, and syne to Tammie Bodkin, and last of all to Magneezhy himself, that his skin was not so much as peeled. So we helped him out of the bed, and blithe was I to see the lad standing on the floor, without a hold, on his own feet.

I did my best to clean his neckcloth and shirt of the blood, making him look as decentish as possible, considering circumstances; and lending him, as the Scripture commands, my tartan mantle to hide the infirmity of his bloody trousers and waistcoat. Home went he and his master together,—me standing at our close mouth, wishing them a good morning, and blithe to see their backs. Indeed a condemned thief with the rope about his neck, and the white cowl tied over his eyes, to say nothing of his hands yerked together behind his back, and on the nick of being thrown over, could not have been more thankful for a reprieve than I was at the same blessed moment. It was like Adam seeing the deil's rear marching out of Paradise, if one may be allowed to think such a thing.

The whole business, tag-rag and bobtail, soon, however, spunked out, and was the town talk for more than one day. But you'll hear.

At the first I pitied the poor lads, that I thought had fled for ever and aye from their native country, to Bengal, Ser-
ingapatam, Copenhagen, Botany Bay, or Jamaica, leaving
behind them all their friends and old Scotland, as they
might never hear of the goodness of Providence in their
behalf. But wait a wee.

Would you believe it? As sure's death, the whole was
but a wicked trick, played by that mischievous loon Blister
and his cronies, upon one that was a simple and soft-headed
callant. Deil a hait was in the one pistol but a pluff of
powder; and in the other a cartridge-paper, full of blood,
was rammed down upon the charge,—the which, hitting
Magneezhy on the ee-bree, had caused a business that
seemed to have put him out of life, and nearly put me
(though one of the volunteers) out of my seven senses.

CHAPTER XVII.

MY FIRST AND LAST PLAY.

Pla. I' faith.

I like the audience that frequenteth there
With much applause: a man shall not be chokt
With the stench of garlick, nor be pasted firm
To the barmy jacket of a beer-brewer.

Bra. 'Tis a good gentle audience, and I hope
The boys will come one day in great request."

—*Jack Drum's Entertainment*: 1601.

"Out cam the gudeman, and laigh he louted;
Out cam the gudewife, and heigh she shouted;
And a' the toun-neibours gather'd about it;
And there he lay, I trow."

—*The Cauldrife Wooer*.

The time of Tammie Bodkin's apprenticeship being nearly
worn through, it behoved me, as a man attentive to business
and the interests of my family, to cast my eyes around me
in search of a callant to fill his place: as it is customary in
our trade for young men, when their time is out, taking a
year's journeyman'ship in Edinburgh, to perfect them in the
more intricate branches of the business, and learn the newest

manner of the French and London fashions, by cutting cloth for the young advocates, the college students, the banking-house clerks, the half-pay ensigns, and the rest of the principal tip-top bucks.

Having, though I say it myself, the word of being a canny maister, more than one brought their callants to me on reading the bill of "An apprentice wanted" pasted on my shop-window.

Offering to bind them for the regular time, yet not wishing to take but one, I thought best not to fix in a hurry, and make choice of him that seemed more exactly cut out for my purpose. In the course of a few weeks three or four cast up, among whom was a laddie of Ben Aits the meal-monger, and a son of William Burlings the baker, to say little of the callant of Saunders Broom the sweep, that would fain have put his blackit-looking bit creature with the one eye and the wooden leg under my wing; but I aye looked to respectability in these matters, so glad was I when I got the offer of Mungo Glen. But more of this in half a minute.

I must say I was glad of any feasible excuse to make to the sweep to get quit of him and his laddie, the father being a drucken ne'er-do-weel, that I wonder did not fall long ere this time of day from some chimney-head and get his neck broken. So I told him at long and last, when he came papping into my shop, plaguing me every time he passed, that I had fitted myself, and that there would be no need of his taking the trouble to call again. Upon which he gave his blacked nieve a desperate thump on the counter, making the observation, that out of respect for him I might have given his son the preference. Though I was a wee puzzled for an answer, I said to him, for want of a better, that having a timber leg, he could not well creuk his hough to the shop-board for our trade.

"Hout, touts," said Saunders, giving his lips a smack—"creuk his hough, ye body you! Do you think his timber leg canna screw off? That'll no pass."

I was a little dumfounded at this cleverness. So I said, more on my guard, "True, true, Saunders, but he's ower little."

"Ower little, and be hanged to ye," cried the disrespect-

ful fellow, wheeling about on his heel, as he grasped the sneck of the shop-door, and gave a girn that showed the only clean parts of his body—to wit, the whites of his eyes and his sharp teeth. “Ower little! Pu, pu! He’s like the blackamoor’s pig, then, Maister Wauch—he’s like the blackamoor’s pig—he may be ver’ leetle, but he be tamould;” and with this he showed his back, clapping the door at his tail without wishing a good-day. And I am scarcely sorry when I confess, that I never cut cloth for either father or son from that hour to this one, the losing of such a customer being no great matter at best, and almost clear gain compared with saddling myself with a callant with only one eye and one leg,—the one having fallen a victim to the dregs of the measles, and the other having been harled off by a farmer’s threshing-mill. However, I got myself properly suited. But ye shall hear.

Our neighbour, Mrs Grassie, a widow woman, unco intimate with our wife, and very attentive to Benjie when he had the chincough, had a far-away cousin of the name of Glen, that held out among the howes of the Lammermoor hills—a distant part of the country, ye observe. Auld Glen, a decent-looking body of a creature, had come in with his sheltie about some private matters of business—such as the buying of a horse, or something to that effect, where he could best fall in with it, either at our fair, or the Grass-market, or suchlike; so he had up-pitting, free of expense, from Mrs Grassie, on account of his relationship,—Glen being second cousin to Mrs Grassie’s brother’s wife, which is deceased. I might, indeed, have mentioned that our neighbour herself had been twice married, and had the misery of seeing out both her gudemen; but such was the will of fate, and she bore up with perfect resignation.

Having made a bit warm dinner ready, for she was a tidy body, and knew what was what, she thought she could not do better than ask in a reputable neighbour to help her friend to eat it, and take a cheerer with him, as maybe, being a stranger here, he would not like to use the freedom of drinking by himself—a custom which is at the best an unsocial one—especially with none but women-folk near him. So she did me the honour to make choice of me—though I say it, who should not say it,—and when we got

our jug filled for the second time, and began to grow better acquainted, ye would really wonder to see how we became merry, and cracked away just like two pen-guns. I asked him, ye see, about sheep and cows, and corn and hay, and ploughing and threshing, and horses and carts, and fallow land, and lambing-time, and har'st, and making cheese and butter, and selling eggs, and curing the sturdie, and the snifters, and the batts, and suchlike ; and he, in his turn, made inquiry regarding broad and narrow cloth, Kilmarnock cowls, worsted comforters, Shetland hose, mittens, leather-caps, stuffing and padding, metal and mule buttons, thorks, pocket-linings, serge, twist, buckram, shaping and sewing, back-splaying, cloth-runds, goosing the labroad, botkins, black thread, patent shears, measuring, and all the other particulars belonging to our trade, which he said, at long and last, after we had joked together, was a power better one than the farming line.

"Ye should make your son ane, then," said I, "if ye think so. Have ye any bairns?"

"Ye've hit the nail on the head. 'Od, man, if ye wasna so far away, I would bind our auldest callant to yoursell, I'm sae weel pleased wi' your gentlemanly manners. But I'm speaking havers."

"Havers here or havers there, what," said I, "is to prevent ye boarding him, at a cheap rate, either with our friend Mrs Grassie, or with the wife? Either of the two would be a sort of mother to him."

"'Deed I daur say would they," answered Maister Glen, stroking his chin, which was gey rough, and had not got a clean since Sunday, having had four days of sheer growth—our meeting, you will observe by this, being on the Thursday afternoon—" 'deed would they. 'Od, I maun speak to the mistress about it."

On the head of this we had another jug, three being cannie, after which we were both a wee tozy-mozy ; and I daresay Mrs Grassie saw plainly that we were getting into a state where we would not easily make a halt ; so, without letting on, she brought in the tea-things before us, and showed us a playbill, to tell us that a company of strolling play-actors had come in a body in the morning, with a whole cartful of scenery and grand dresses, and were to make an

exhibition at seven o'clock, at the ransom of a shilling a-head, in Laird Wheatley's barn.

Many a time and often had I heard of play-acting, and of players making themselves kings and queens, and saying a great many wonderful things, but I had never before an opportunity of making myself a witness to the truth of these hearsays. So Maister Glen, being as full of nonsense, and as fain to have his curiosity gratified as myself, we took upon us the stout resolution to go out together, he offering to treat me; and I determined to run the risk of Maister Wiggie, our minister's, rebuke for the transgression, hoping it would make no lasting impression on his mind, being for the first and only time. Folks should not on all occasions be over-scrupulous.

After paying our money at the door, never, while I live and breathe, will I forget what we saw and heard that night; it just looks to me, by all the world, when I think on it, like a fairy dream. The place was crowded to the full, Maister Glen and me having nearly got our ribs dung in before we found a seat, the folks behind being obliged to mount the back benches to get a sight. Right to the fore-hand of us was a large green curtain, some five or six ells wide, a good deal the worse of the wear, having seen service through two-three summers; and just in the front of it were eight or ten penny candles, stuck in a board fastened to the ground, to let us see the players' feet like, when they came on the stage—and even before they came on the stage; for the curtain being scrimpit in length, we saws legs and sandals moving behind the scenes very neatly; while two blind fiddlers they had brought with them played the bonniest ye ever heard. 'Od, the very music was worth a sixpence of itself.

The place, as I said before, was choke-full, just to excess, so that one could scarcely breathe. Indeed I never saw any part so crowded, not even at a tent-preaching, when the Rev. Mr Roarer was giving his discourses on the building of Solomon's Temple. We were obligated to have the windows opened for a mouthful of fresh air, the barn being as close as a baker's oven, my neighbour and me fanning our red faces with our hats to keep us cool; and though all were half stewed, we certainly had the worst of it, the toddy we

had taken having fermented the blood of our bodies into a perfect fever.

Just at the time that the two blind fiddlers were playing the Downfall of Paris, a hand-bell rang, and up goes the green curtain—being hauled to the ceiling, as I observed with the tail of my eye, by a birkie at the side that had hold of a rope. So, on the music stopping, and all becoming as still as that you might have heard a pin fall, in comes a decent old gentleman at his leisure, well powdered, with an old-fashioned coat on, waistcoat with flap-pockets, brown breeches with buckles at the knees, and silk stockings with red gushats on a blue ground. I never saw a man in such distress: he stamped about, and better stamped about, dadding the end of his staff on the ground, and imploring all the powers of heaven and earth to help him to find out his runaway daughter, that had decamped with some ne'er-do-weel loon of a half-pay captain, that keppit her in his arms from her bedroom-window, up two pair of stairs.

Every father and head of a family must have felt for a man in his situation, thus to be robbed of his dear bairn, and an only daughter too, as he told us over and over again, as the salt, salt tears ran gushing down his withered face, and he aye blew his nose on his clean calendered pocket-napkin. But, ye know, the thing was absurd to suppose that we should know any inkling about the matter, having never seen him or his daughter between the een before, and not kenning them by headmark; so, though we sympathised with him, as folks ought to do with a fellow-creature in affliction, we thought it best to hold our tongues, to see what might cast up better than he expected. So out he went stumping at the other side, determined, he said, to find them out, though he should follow them to the world's end, Johnny Groat's House, or something to that effect.

Hardly was his back turned, and almost before ye could cry Jack Robison, in comes the birkie and the very young lady the old gentleman described, arm-and-arm together, smoodging and laughing like daft. Dog on it! it was a shameless piece of business. As true as death, before all the crowd of folk, he put his arm round her waist, and called her his sweetheart, and love, and dearie, and darling, and everything that is fine. If they had been courting in a

close together on a Friday night, they could not have said more to one another, or gone greater lengths. I thought such shame to be an eyewitness to sic on-goings, that I was obliged at last to hold up my hat before my face and look down; though, for all that, the young lad, to be such a blackguard as his conduct showed, was well enough faured, and had a good coat to his back, with double gilt buttons and fashionable lapells, to say little of a very well-made pair of buckskins, a thought the worse of the wear, to be sure, but which, if they had been well cleaned, would have looked almost as good as new. How they had come we never could learn, as we neither saw chaise nor gig; but from his having spurs on his boots, it is more than likely that they had lighted at the back-door of the barn from a horse, she riding on a pad behind him, maybe, with her hand round his waist.

The father looked to be a rich old bool, both from his manner of speaking and the rewards he seemed to offer for the apprehension of his daughter; but to be sure, when so many of us were present that had an equal right to the spuilzie, it would not be a great deal a thousand pounds when divided, still it was worth the looking after: so we just bidit a wee.

Things were brought to a bearing, howsoever, sooner than either themselves, I daresay, or anybody else present, seemed to have the least glimpse of; for just in the middle of their fine goings-on, the sound of a coming foot was heard, and the lassie, taking guilt to her, cried out, "Hide me, hide me, for the sake of goodness, for yonder comes my old father!"

No sooner said than done. In he stappit her into a closet, and, after shutting the door on her, he sat down upon a chair, pretending to be asleep in the twinkling of a walking-stick. The old father came bouncing in, and seeing the fellow as sound as a top, he ran forward and gave him such a shake as if he would have shook him all sundry, which soon made him open his eyes as fast as he had steeked them. After blackguarding the chield at no allowance, cursing him up hill and down dale, and calling him every name but a gentleman, he held his staff over his crown, and gripping him by the cuff of the neck, asked him, in a fierce

tone, what he had made of his daughter. Never since I was born did I ever see such brazen-faced impudence ! The rascal had the brass to say at once, that he had not seen word or wittens of the lassie for a month, though more than a hundred folk sitting in his company had beheld him daunting her with his arm round her jimpy waist, not five minutes before. As a man, as a father, as an elder of our kirk, my corruption was raised, for I aye hated lying as a poor cowardly sin, and an inbreak on the ten commandments, and I found my neighbour, Mr Glen, fidgeting on the seat as well as me ; so I thought that whoever spoke first would have the best right to be entitled to the reward ; whereupon, just as he was in the act of rising up, I took the word out of his mouth, saying, “ Dinna believe him, auld gentleman—dinna believe him, friend ; he’s telling a parcel of lees. Never saw her for a month ! It’s no worth arguing, or calling witnesses—just open that press-door, and ye’ll see whether I’m speaking truth or not ! ”

The old man stared, and looked dumbfounded ; and the young one, instead of running forward with his double nieves to strike me, the only thing I was feared for, began a-laughing, as if I had done him a good turn. But never since I had a being did I ever witness such an uproar and noise as immediately took place. The whole house was so glad that the scoundrel had been exposed, that they set up siccan a roar of laughter, and thumped away at siccan a rate at the boards with their feet, that, at long and last, with pushing and fidgeting, clapping their hands and holding their sides, down fell the place they call the gallery, all the folk in’t being hurled topsy-turvy, head foremost among the sawdust on the floor below, their guffawing soon being turned to howling, each one crying louder than another at the top note of their voices, “ Murder ! murder ! hold off me ; murder ! my ribs are in ; murder ! I’m killed—I’m speechless ! ” and other lamentations to that effect, so that a rush to the door took place, in the which everything was overturned—the door-keeper being wheeled away like wildfire—the furms stramped to pieces—the lights knocked out—and the two blind fiddlers dung head foremost over the stage, the bass fiddle cracking like thunder at every bruise. Such tearing, and swearing, and tumbling, and squealing.

was never witnessed in the memory of man since the building of Babel : legs being likely to be broken, sides staved in, eyes knocked out, and lives lost—there being only one door, and that a small one ; so that when we had been carried off our feet that length, my wind was fairly gone, and a sick dwalm came over me, lights of all manner of colours, red, blue, green, and orange, dancing before me, that entirely deprived me of common sense, till, on opening my eyes in the dark, I found myself leaning with my broadside against the wall on the opposite side of the close. It was some time before I minded what had happened, so, dreading skaith, I found first the one arm, and then the other, to see if they were broken ; syne my head ; and finally, both of my legs ; but all, as well as I could discover, was skin-whole, and scart-free. On perceiving this, my joy was without bounds, having a great notion that I had been killed on the spot. So I reached round my hand, very thankfully, to take out my pocket-napkin to give my brow a wipe, when, lo and behold ! the tail of my Sunday's coat was fairly off and away, docked by the hainch buttons.

So much for plays and play-actors—the first and last, I trust in grace, that I shall ever see. But indeed I could expect no better, after the warning that Maister Wiggie had more than once given us from the pulpit on the subject. Instead, therefore, of getting my grand reward for finding the old man's daughter, the whole covey of them, no better than a set of swindlers, took leg-bail, and made that very night a moonlight flitting ; and Johnny Hammer, honest man, that had wrought from sunrise to sunset for two days, fitting up their place by contract, instead of being well paid for his trouble, as he deserved, got nothing left him but a ruckle of his own good deals, all dung to shivers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BARLEY-FEVER—AND REBUKE.

“Sages their solemn een may steek,
And raise a philosophic reek,
And, physically, causes seek,
In cline and season ;
But tell me *Whisky's* name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.”—BURNS.

On the morning after the business of the play-house had happened, I had to take my breakfast in my bed, a thing very uncommon to me, being generally up by cock-crow, except on Sunday mornings whiles, when each one, according to the bidding of the Fourth Commandment, has a licence to do as he likes, having a desperate sore head, and a squeamishness at the stomach, occasioned, I jealousy in a great measure, from what Maister Glen and me had discussed at Widow Grassie's, in the shape of warm toddy, over our cracks concerning what is called the agricultural and manufacturing interests. So our wife, poor body, put a thimbleful of brandy, Thomas Mixem's real, into my first cup of tea, which had a wonderful virtue in putting all things to rights, so that I was up and had shaped a pair of lady's corsets, an article in which I sometimes dealt, before ten o'clock, though, the morning being rather cold, I did not dispense with my Kilmarnock.

At eleven in the forenoon, or thereabouts, maybe five minutes before or after, but no matter, in comes my crony Maister Glen, rather dazed-like about the een, and with a large piece of white sticking-plaster, about half a nail wide, across one of his cheeks and over the bridge of his nose, giving him a wauf, outlandish, and rather blackguard sort of appearance, so that I was a thought uneasy at what neighbours might surmise concerning our intimacy ; but the honest man accounted for the thing in a very feasible manner, from the falling down on that side of his head of one of the brass candlesticks while he was lying on his broadside before one of the furms in the stramash.

His purpose of calling was to tell me that he could not leave the town without looking in upon me to bid me fare-

well, more betoken as he intended sending in his son Mungo by the carrier, for trial, to see how the line of life pleased him, and how I thought he would answer—a thing which I was glad came from his side of the house, being likely to be in the upshot the best for both parties. Yet I thought he would find our way of doing so canny and comfortable, that it was not very likely he could ever start objections: and I must confess, that I looked forward with no small degree of pride, seeing the probability of my soon having the son of a Lammermoor farmer sitting cross-legged, cheek for jowl with me on the board, and bound to serve me at all lawful times, by night and day, by a regular indenture of five years. Maister Glen insisted on the laddie having a three months' trial; and then, after a trifling show of standing out, just to make him aware that I could be elsewhere fitted if I had a mind, I agreed that the request was reasonable, and that I had no earthly objections to conforming with it. So, after giving him his meridian and a bite of shortbread, we shook hands, and parted in the understanding that his son would arrive on the top of limping Jamie the carrier's cart, in the course, say, of a fortnight.

Through the whole of the forepart of the day I remained rather queerish, as if something was working about my inwards, and a droll pain between my eyes. The wife saw the case I was in, and advised me, for the sake of the fresh air, to take a step into the bit garden, and try a hand at the spade, the smell of the new earth being likely to operate as a cordial; but no—it would not do; and when I came in at one o'clock to my dinner, the steam of the fresh broth, instead of making me feel, as usual, as hungry as a hawk, was like to turn my stomach, while the sight of the sheep's head, one of the primest ones I had seen the whole season, looked, by all the world, like the head of a boiled black-amoor, and made me as sick as a dog: so I could do nothing but take a turn out again, and swig away at the small beer, that never seemed able to slocken my drouth. At long and last, I minded having heard Andrew Redbeak, the excise-officer, say that nothing ever put him right after a debosh except something they call a bottle of soda-water; so my wife despatched Benjie to the place where we knew it could be found, and he returned in a jiffy with a thing like a

blackening-bottle below his dailly, as he was bidden. There being a wire over the cork for some purpose or other, or maybe just to look neat, we had some fight to get it torn away, but at last we succeeded. I had turned about for a jug, and the wife was rummaging for the screw, while Benjie was fiddling away with his fingers at the cork—Save us ! all at once it gave a thud like thunder, driving the cork over poor Benjie's head, while it squirted there-up in his eyes like a fire-engine, and I had only just time to throw down the jug, and up with the bottle to my mouth. Luckily, for the sixpence it cost, there was a drop left, which tasted, by all the world, just like brisk dish-washings ; but for all that, it had a wonderful power of setting me to rights ; and my noddle in a while began to clear up, like a March day after a heavy shower.

I mind very well, too, on the afternoon of the dividual same day, that my door-neighbour, Thomas Burlings, popped in, and, in our two-handed crack over the counter, after asking me in a dry, curious way, if I had come by no skaith in the business of the play, he said the thing had now spread far and wide, and was making a great noise in the world. I thought the body a wee sharp in his observes ; so I pretended to take it quite lightly, proceeding in my shaping-out a pair of buckskin breeches, which I was making for one of the Duke's huntsmen ; so seeing he was off the scent, he said in a more jocose way—

“Well, speaking about buckskins, I'll tell ye a good story about that.”

“Let us hear't,” said I ; for I was in that sort of queerish way, that I did not care much about being very busy.

“Ye'se get it as I heard it,” quo' Thomas ; “and it's no less worth telling, that it bears a good moral application in its tail,—after the same fashion that a blister does good by sucking away the vicious humours of the body, thereby making the very pain it gives precious.” And here—though maybe it was just my thought—the body stroked his chin, and gave me a kind of half gley, as much as saying, “take that to ye, neighbour.” But I deserved it all, and could not take it ill off his hand—being, like myself, one of the elders of our kirk, and an honest enough, precise-speaking man.

"Ye see, ye ken," said Thomas, "that the Breadalbane Fencibles, a wheen Highland birkies, were put into camp at Fisherrow links, maybe for the benefit of their douking, on account of the fiddle¹—or maybe in case the French should land at the water-mouth—or maybe to give the regiment the benefit of the sea air—or maybe to make their bare houghs hardier, for it was the winter time, frost and snaw being as plenty as ye like, and no sae scarce as pantaloons among the core—or for some ither reason, guid, bad, or indifferent, which disna muckle matter ; but ye see, the lang and the short o' the story is, that there they were encamped, man and mother's son of them, going through their dreels by day, and sleeping by night—the privates in their tents, and the offishers in their marquees, living in the course of nature on their usual rations of beef, and tammies, and so on. So, ye understand me, there was nae such smart ordering of things in the army in those days, the men not having the beef served out to them by a butcher, supplying each company or companies by a written contract, drawn up between him and the paymaster before 'sponsible witnesses ; but ilka ane bringing what pleased him—either tripe, trotters, steaks, cow's-cheek, pluck, hough, spar-rib, jigget, or so forth."

"'Od !" said I, "Thomas, ye crack like a minister. Where did ye happen to pick up all that knowledge ?"

"Where should I have got it, but from an auld half-pay sergeant-major, that lived in our spare room, and had been out in the American war, having seen a power of service, and been twice wounded—once in the aff-cuit, and the other time in the cuff of the neck."

"I thought as muckle," said I. "Weel, say on, man, it's unco entertaining."

"Weel," continued he, "let me see where I was at when ye stoppit me ; for maybe I'll hae to begin at the beginning again. For gif ye yinterrupt me, or edge in a word, or put me out by asking questions, I lose the thread of my discourse, and canna proceed."

"Ou, let me see," said I, "ye was about the contract concerning the beef."

¹ See Dr Jamieson.—P. D.

“Preceesely,” quo’ Thomas, stretching out his fore-finger—“ye’ve said it to a hair. At that time, as I was observing, the butcher didna supply a company or companies, according to the terms of a contract, drawn up before ’sponsible witnesses, between him and the paymaster; but the soldiers got beef-money along with their pay,—with which said money, given them, ye observe, for said purpose, they were bound and obligated, in terms of the statute, to buy, purchase, and provide the said beef, twice a-week or oftener, as it might happen; an orderly offisher making inspection of the camp-kettles regularly every forenoon, at one o’clock or thereabouts.

“So, as ye’ll pay attention to observe, there was a private in Captain M’Tavish’s company, the second to the left of the centre, of the name of Duncan MacAlpine, a wee, hardy, black-aviced, in-knee’d creature, remarkable for nothing that ever I heard tell of, except being reported to have shotten a gauger in Badenough, or thereabouts—and for having a desperate red nose, the effects, ye observe, of drinking spirituous liquors; ye observe, I daur say, what I am saying—the effects of drinking malt speerits.

“Weel, week after week passed over, and better passed over, and Duncan played aff his tricks, like anither Herman Boaz, the slight-o’-hand juggler, him that’s suspekkit to be in league and paction with the de’il. But ye’ll hear.”

“’Od, it’s diverting, Thomas,” said I to him; “gang on, man.”

“Weel, ye see, as I was observing—Let me see, where was I at?—Ou ay, having a paction with the de’il. So, when all were watching beside the camp-kettles, some stirring them with spurtles, or parritch-sticks, or forks, or whatever was necessary, the orderly offisher made a point and practice of regularly coming by, about the chap of one past meridian, as I observed to ye before, to make inspection of what ilka ane had wared his pay on, and what he had got simmering in the het water for his dinner.

“So, on the day concerning which I am about to speak, it fell out, as usual, that he happened to be making his rounds, halting a moment, or twa maybe, before ilka pot; the man that had the charge thereof, by the way of stirring like,

clapping down his lang fork, and bringing up the piece of meat, or whatever he happened to be making kail of, to let the inspector see whether it was lamb, pork, beef, mutton, or veal. For, ye observe," continued Thomas, giving me, as I took it to myself, another queer side-look, "the purpose of the offisher making the inspection was to see that they laid out their pay-money conform to military regulation; and not to fying their stamieks, and ruining baith sowl and body, by throwing it away on whisky—as but ower mony, that aiblins should have kenned better, have dune but too often."

"'Tis but ower true," said I till him; "but the best will fa' intil a faut sometimes. We have a' our failings, Thomas."

"Just so," answered Thomas; "but where was I at?—Ou, about the whisky. Weel, speaking about the whisky, ye see the offisher, Lovetenant Todrick I b'lief they called him, had made an observe about Duncan's kettle; so, when he came to him, Duncan was sitting in the lown side of a dyke, with his red nose, and a pipe in his cheek, on a big stane, glowing frae him anither way; and, as I was saying, when he came to him he said—

"'Weel, Duncan MacAlpine, what have ye in your kettle the day, man?'

"And Duncan, rinning down his lang fork, answered in his ain Highland brogue way,—'Please your honours, just my auld favourite—tripe.'

"'Deed, Duncan,' said Lovetenant Todrick, or whatever they caa'd him, 'it is an auld favourite, surely, for I have never seen ye have onything else for your dinner, man.'

"'Every man to his taste, please your honour,' answered Duncan MacAlpine; 'let ilka ane please her nain sell,'—hauling up a screed half a yard lang. 'Ilka man to his taste, please your honour, Lovetenant Todrick.'

"'Od, man," said I to him,—"'Od, man, ye're a deacon at telling a story. Ye're a queer hand. Weel, what came next?'

"What think ye should come next?" quo' Thomas, drily.

"I'm sure I dinna ken," answered I.

"Weel," said he, "I'll tell—but where was I at?"

"Ou, at the observe of Lovetenant Todrick, or what



Lieutenant Todrick & the Leather Breeches.

they caa'd him, about the tripe ; and the answer of Duncan MacAlpine on that head, 'That ilka man has his ain taste.'"

"'Vera true,' said Lovetenant Todrick, 'but lift it out a'thegither on that dish, till I get my specs on ; for never since I was born did I ever see before boiled tripe with buttons and button-holes intill't.'"

At this I set up a loud laughing, which I could not help, though it was like to split my sides ; but Thomas Burlings bade me whisht till I heard him out.

"'Buttons and button-holes !' quo' Duncan MacAlpine. 'Look again, wi' yer specs ; for ye're surely wrang, Lovetenant Todrick.'

"'Buttons and button-holes ! and 'deed I am surely right, Duncan,' answered the Lovetenant Todrick, taking his specs deliberately off the brig o' his nose, and faulding them thegither, as he put them first into his shagreen case, and syne into his pocket. 'Howsomever, Duncan MacAlpine, I'll pass ye ower for this time, gif ye take my warning, and for the future ware your pay-money on wholesome butcher's meat, like a Christian, and no be trying to delude your ain stamick, and your offisher's een, by holding up, on a fork, such a heathenish mak-up for a dish as the leg of a pair o' buckskin breeches !'"

"'Buckskin breeches !" said I ; "and did he really and actually boil siccan trash to his dinner ?"

"'Nae sae far south as that yet, friend,' answered Thomas. "Duncan was not so bowed in the intellect as ye imagine, and had some spice of cleverality about his queer manœuvres. Eat siccan trash to his dinner ! Nae mair, Mansie, than ye intend to eat that iron guse ye're rinning along that piece claith ; but he wanted to make his offishers believe that his pay gaed the right way—like the Pharisees of old that keepit praying, in ell-lang faces, about the corners of the streets, and gaed hame wi' hearts full of wickedness and a' manner of cheatrie."

"And what way did his pay gang, then ?" asked I ; "and how did he live ?"

"I telled ye before, frien," answered Thomas, "that he was a deboshed creature ; and, like ower mony in the

world, likit weel what didna do him ony good. It's a wearyfu' thing that whisky. I wish it could be banished to Botany Bay."

"It is that," said I. "Muckle and nae little sin does it breed and produce in this world."

"I'm glad," quoth Thomas, stroking down his chin in a slee way—"I'm glad the guilty should see the folly o' their ain ways; it's the first step, ye ken, till amendment;—and indeed I tell't Maister Wiggie, when he sent me here, that I could almost become guid for your being mair wary of your conduct for the future time to come."

This was like a thunder-clap to me, and I did not know for a jiffie what to feel, think, or do, more than perceiving that it was a piece of devilish cruelty on their parts, taking things on this strict. As for myself, I could freely take sacred oath on the Book, that I had not had a dram in my head for four months before; the knowledge of which made my corruption rise like lightning, as a man is aye brave when he is innocent; so, giving my pow a bit scart, I said briskly, "So ye're after some session business in this visit, are ye?"

"Ye've just guessed it," answered Thomas Burlings, sleeking down his front hair with his fingers in a sober way; "we had a meeting this forenoon; and it was resolved ye should stand a public rebuke in the meeting-house on Sunday next."

"Hang me if I do!" answered I, thumping my nieve down with all my might on the counter, and throwing back my cowl behind me into a corner. "No, man!" added I, snapping with great pith my finger and thumb in Thomas's eyes, "not for all the ministers and elders that ever were cleckit! They may do their best; and ye may tell them so, if ye like. I was born a free man; I live in a free country; I am the subject of a free king and constitution; and I'll be shot before I submit to such rank diabolical papistry."

"Hooly and fairly," quoth Thomas, staring a wee astonished like, and not a little surprised to see my birse up in this manner; for, when he thought upon shearing a lamb, he found he had caught a tartar: so, calming down as

fast as ye like, he said, "Hooly and fairey, Mansie" (or Maister Wauch, I believe he did me the honour to call me), "they'll maybe no be sae hard as they threaten. But ye ken, my friend, I'm speaking to ye as a brither; it was an unco-like business for an elder, not only to gang till a play, which is aone of the deevil's rendezvous, but to gang there in a state of liquor; making yourself a world's wonder—and you an elder of our kirk!! I put the question to yourself soberly."

His threatening I could despise, and could have fought, cuffed, and kicked with all the ministers and elders of the General Assembly, to say nothing of the Relief Synod and the Burgher Union, before I would have demeaned myself to yield to what my inward spirit plainly told me to be rank cruelty and injustice; but ah! his calm, brotherly, flattering way I could not thole with, and the tears came rapping into my eyes, faster than it cared my manhood to let be seen; so I said till him, "Weel, weel, Thomas, I ken I have done wrong; and I am sorry for't: they'll never find me in siccan a scrape again."

Thomas Burlings then came forward in a friendly way, and shook hands with me; telling that he would go back and plead before them in my behalf. He said this over again as we parted at my shop-door. And to do him justice, surely he had not been worse than his word; for I have aye attended the kirk as usual, standing, when it came to my rotation, at the plate, and nobody, gentle or semple, ever spoke to me on the subject of the playhouse, or minted the matter of the Rebuke, from that day to this.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE AWFUL NIGHT.

“ Ha !—’twas but a dream ;
 But then so terrible, it shakes my soul !
 Cold drops of sweat hang on my trembling flesh ;
 My blood grows chilly, and I freeze with horror.”

—*Richard the Third.*

“ The Fire-king one day rather amorous felt ;
 He mounted his hot copper filly ;
 His breeches and boots were of tin, and the belt
 Was made of cast-iron, for fear it should melt
 With the heat of the copper colt’s belly.

“ Oh ! then there was glitter and fire in each eye,
 For two living coals were the symbols ;
 His teeth were calcined, and his tongue was so dry,
 It rattled against them as though you should try
 To play the piano on thimbles.”—*Rejected Addresses.*

In the course of a fortnight from the time I parted with Maister Glen, the Lauder carrier, limping Jamie, brought his callant to our shop-door in his hand. He was a tall slender laddie, some fourteen years old, and sore grown away from his clothes. There was something genty and delicate-like about him, having a pale sharp face, blue eyes, a nose like a hawk’s, and long yellow hair hanging about his haffets, as if barbers were unco scarce cattle among the howes of the Lammermoor hills. Having a general experience of human nature, I saw that I would have something to do towards bringing him into a state of rational civilisation ; but considering his opportunities, he had been well educated, and I liked his appearance on the whole not that ill.

To divert him a while, as I did not intend yoking him to work the first day, I sent out Benjie with him, after giving him some refreshment of bread and milk, to let him see the town and all the uncocs about it. I told Benjie first to take him to the auld kirk, which is one wonderful building, steeple and aisle—and as for mason-work, far before anything to be seen or heard tell of in our day ; syne to Lugton brig, which is one grand affair, hanging over the river Esk and the flour-mills like a rainbow ; syne to the Tolbooth, which is a terror to evil-doers, and from which the Lord

preserve us all ! syne to the Market, where ye'll see lamb, beef, mutton, and veal hanging up on cleeks, in roasting and boiling pieces—spar-rib, jigget, shoulder, and heuk-bane, in the greatest prodigality of abundance ; and syne down to the Duke's gate, by looking through the bonny white-painted irons tanchels of which ye'll see the deer running beneath the green trees,—and the palace itself, in the inside of which dwells one that needs not be proud to call the king his cousin.

Brawly did I know that it is a little after a laddie's being loosed from his mother's apron-string and hurried from home, till the mind can make itself up to stay among fremit folk ; or that the attention can be roused to anything said or done, however simple in the uptake. So, after Benjie brought Mungo home again, gey forfaughten and wearied-out like, I bade the wife give him his four-hours, and told him he might go to his bed as soon as he liked. Jealousing also, at the same time, that creatures brought up in the country have strange notions about them with respect to supernaturals—such as ghosts, brownies, fairies, and bogles—to say nothing of witches, warlocks, and evil-spirits, I made Benjie take off his clothes and lie down beside him,—as I said, to keep him warm ; but, in plain matter of fact (between friends), that the callant might sleep sounder, finding himself in a strange bed, and not very sure as to how the house stood as to the matter of a good name.

Knowing by my own common-sense, and from long experience of the ways of a wicked world, that there is nothing like industry, I went to Mungo's bedside in the morning and wakened him betimes. Indeed, I'm leeing there ; I need not call it wakening him, for Benjie told me when he was supping his parritch out of his luggie at breakfast-time, that he never winked an eye all night, and that sometimes he heard him greeting to himself in the dark—such and so powerful is our love of home and the force of natural affection. Howsoever, as I was saying, I took him ben the house with me down to the workshop, where I had begun to cut out a pair of nankeen trowsers for a young lad that was to be married the week after to a servant-maid of Maister Wiggie's—a trig quean, that afterwards made him a good wife, and the father of a numerous small family.

Speaking of nankeen, I would advise every one, as a friend, to buy the Indian and not the British kind—the expense of outlay being ill hained, even at sixpence a yard—the latter not standing the washing, but making a man's legs at a distance look like a yellow yorline.

It behoved me now as a maister, bent on the improvement of his 'prentice, to commence learning Mungo some few of the mysteries of our trade ; so having showed him the way to crook his hough (example is better than precept, as James Batter observes), I taught him the plan of holding the needle ; and having fitted his middle finger with a bottomless thimble of our own sort, I set him to sewing the cotton-lining into one leg, knowing that it was a part not very particular, and not very likely to be seen ; so that the matter was not great whether the stitching was exactly regular or rather in the zigzag line. As is customary with all new beginners, he made a desperate awkward hand at it, and of which I would of course have said nothing, but that he chanced to brog his thumb, and completely soiled the whole piece of work with the stains of blood, which, for one thing, could not wash out without being seen, and for another, was an unlucky omen to happen to a marriage garment.

Every man should be on his guard : this was a lesson I learned when I was in the volunteers, at the time Buona-parté was expected to land down at Dunbar. Luckily for me in this case, I had, by some foolish mistake or another, made an allowance of a half-yard over and above what I found I could manage to shape on, so I boldly made up my mind to cut out the piece altogether, it being in the back seam. In that business I trust I showed the art of a good tradesman, having managed to do it so neatly that it could not be noticed without the narrowest inspection ; and having the advantage of a covering by the coat-flaps, had indeed no chance of being so, except on desperately windy days.

In the week succeeding that on which this unlucky mischance happened, an accident almost as bad befell, though not to me, further than that every one is bound by the Ten Commandments, to say nothing of his own conscience, to take a part in the afflictions that befall their door-neighbours.

When the voice of man was wheisht, and all was sunk in the sound sleep of midnight, it chanced that I was busy dreaming that I was sitting, one of the spectators, looking at another play-acting piece of business. Before coming this length, howsoever, I should by right have observed that ere going to bed I had eaten for my supper part of a black pudding and two sausages, that Widow Grassie had sent in a compliment to my wife, being a genteel woman and mindful of her friends—so that I must have had some sort of nightmare, and not been exactly in my seven senses, else I could not have been even dreaming of siccan a place. Well, as I was saying, in the play-house I thought I was; and all at once I heard Maister Wiggie, like one crying in the wilderness, hallooing with a loud voice through the window, bidding me flee from the snares, traps, and gin-nets of the Evil One, and from the terrors of the wrath to come. I was in a terrible funk; and just as I was trying to rise from the seat, that seemed somehow glued to my body, and would not let me, to reach down my hat, which, with its glazed cover, was hanging on a pin to one side, my face all red and glowing like a fiery furnace for shame of being a second time caught in deadly sin, I heard the kirk-bell jow-jowing as if it was the last trump summoning sinners to their long and black account; and Maister Wiggie thrust in his arm in his desperation, in a whirlwind of passion, claugthing hold of my hand like a vice, to drag me out head-foremost. Even in my sleep, howsoever, it appears that I like free-will, and ken that there are no slaves in our blessed country; so I tried with all my might to pull against him, and gave his arm such a drive back that he seemed to bleach over on his side, and raised a hullabaloo of a yell that not only wakened me, but made me start upright in my bed.

For all the world such a scene! My wife was roaring “Murder, murder! Mansie Wauch, will ye no wauken? Murder, murder! ye’ve felled me wi’ your nieve,—ye’ve felled me outright,—I’m gone for evermair,—my hail teeth are down my throat. Will ye no wauken, Mansie Wauch?—will ye no wauken? Murder, murder! I say murder, murder, murder, murder!!!”

“Who’s murdering us?” cried I, throwing my cowl back on the pillow, and rubbing my eyes in the hurry of a tre-

mendous fright. "Who's murdering us? — where's the robbers?—send for the town-officer!"

"O Mansie! O Mansie!" said Nanse, in a kind of greeting tone, "I daursay ye've felled me—but no matter, now I've gotten ye roused. Do ye no see the hail street in a bleeze of flames? Bad is the best; we maun either be burned to death, or out of house and hall, without a rag to cover our nakedness. Where's my son? where's my dear bairn Benjie?"

In a most awful consternation, I jumped at this out to the middle of the floor, hearing the causeway all in an uproar of voices, and seeing the flichtering of the flames glancing on the houses in the opposite side of the street, all the windows of which were filled with the heads of half-naked folks, in round-eared mutches or Kilmarnocks, their mouths open, and their eyes staring with fright; while the sound of the fire-engine, rattling through the streets like thunder, seemed like the dead-cart of the plague, come to hurry away the corpses of the deceased for interment in the kirkyard.

Never such a spectacle was witnessed in this world of sin and sorrow since the creation of Adam. I pulled up the window and looked out—and lo and behold! the very next house to our own was all in a low from cellar to garret, the burning joists hissing and cracking like mad, and the very wind that blew along as warm as if it had been out of the mouth of a baker's oven!

It was a most awful spectacle! more by token to me, who was likely to be intimately concerned with it; and beating my brow with my clenched nieve, like a distracted creature, I saw that the labour of my whole life was likely to go for nought, and me to be a ruined man—all the earnings of my industry being laid out on my stock in trade, and on the plenishing of our bit house. The darkness of the latter days came over my spirit like a vision before the prophet Isaiah, and I could see nothing in the years to come but beggary and starvation; myself a fallen-back old man, with an out-at-the-elbows coat, a greasy hat, and a bald pow, hirpling over a staff, requeeshting an awmous—Nanse a broken-hearted beggar wife, torn down to tatters, and weeping like Rachel when she thought on better days—and

poor wee Benjie going from door to door with a meal-pock on his back.

The thought first dung me stupid, and then drove me to desperation; and not even minding the dear wife of my bosom that had fainted away as dead as a herring, I pulled on my trousers like mad, and rushed out into the street, bareheaded and barefoot as the day that Lucky Bringthere-out dragged me into the world.

The crowd saw in the twinkling of an eyeball that I was a desperate man, fierce as Sir William Wallace, and not to be withstood by gentle or simple. So most of them made way for me; they that tried to stop me finding it a bad job, being heeled over from right to left on the broad of their backs like flounders, without respect of age or person; some old women that were obstrapulous being gey sore hurt, and one of them with a pain in her hainch even to this day. When I had got almost to the door-cheek of the burning house, I found one gruppung me by the back like grim death; and in looking over my shoulder, who was it but Nanse herself, that, rising up from her faint, had pursued me like a whirlwind. It was a heavy trial, but my duty to myself in the first place, and to my neighbours in the second, roused me up to withstand it; so, making a spend like a greyhound, I left the hindside of my shirt in her grasp, like Joseph's garment in the nieve of Potiphar's wife, and up the stairs head-foremost among the flames.

Mercy keep us all! what a sight for mortal man to glowr at with his living eyes! The bells were tolling amid the dark, like a summons from above for the parish of Dalkeith to pack off to another world; the drums were beat-beating as if the French were coming, thousand on thousand, to kill, slay, and devour every maid and mother's son of us; the fire-engine pump-pump-pumping like daft, showering the water like rainbows, as if the windows of heaven were opened and the days of old Noah come back again; and the rabble throwing the good furniture over the windows like onion-peelings, where it either felled the folk below or was dung to a thousand shivers on the causey. I cried to them, for the love of goodness, to make search in the beds, in case there might be any weans there, human life being still more precious than human means; but not a living soul was seen

but a cat, which, being raised and wild with the din, would on no consideration allow itself to be caught. Jacob Dribble found that to his cost ; for, right or wrong, having a drappie in his head, he swore like a trooper that he would catch her, and carry her down beneath his oxter ; so forward he weired her into a corner, crouching on his hunkers. He had much better have let it alone, for it fuffed over his shoulder like wildfire, and scarting his back all the way down, jumped like a lamplighter head-foremost through the flames, where, in the raging and roaring of the devouring element, its pitiful cries were soon hushed to silence for ever and ever, Amen !

At long and last, a woman's howl was heard on the street, lamenting, like Hagar over young Ishmael in the wilderness of Beersheba, and crying that her old grannie, that was a lameter, and had been bedridden for four years come the Martinmas following, was burning to a cinder in the foregarret. My heart was like to burst within me when I heard this dismal news, remembering that I myself had once an old mother, that was now in the mools ; so I brushed up the stair like a hatter, and burst open the door of the foregarret—for in the hurry I could not find the sneck, and did not like to stand on ceremony. I could not see my finger before me, and did not know my right hand from the left, for the smoke ; but I groped round and round, though the reek mostly cut my breath, and made me cough at no allowance, till at last I caught hold of something cold and clammy, which I gave a pull, not knowing what it was, but found out to be the old wife's nose. I cried out as loud as I was able for the poor creature to hoise herself up into my arms ; but receiving no answer, I discovered in a moment that she was suffocated, the foul air having gone down her wrong hause ; and though I had aye a terror at looking at, far less handling, a dead corpse, there was something brave within me at the moment, my blood being up ; so I caught hold of her by the shoulders, and harling her with all my might out of her bed, got her lifted on my back heads and thraws, in the manner of a boll of meal, and away as fast as my legs could carry me.

There was a providence in this haste, for, ere I was half-way down the stair, the floor fell with a thud like thunder ;

and such a combustion of soot, stour, and sparks arose, as was never seen or heard tell of in the memory of man since the day that Samson pulled over the pillars in the house of Dagon, and smooored all the mocking Philistines as flat as flounders. For the space of a minute I was as blind as a beetle, and was like to be choked for want of breath. However, as the dust began to clear up, I saw an open window, and hallooed down to the crowd for the sake of mercy to bring a ladder, to save the lives of two perishing fellow-creatures, for now my own was also in imminent jeopardy. They were long of coming, and I did not know what to do; so thinking that the old wife, as she had not spoken, was maybe dead already, I was once determined just to let her drop down upon the street; but I knew that the so doing would have cracked every bone in her body, and the glory of my bravery would thus have been worse than lost. I persevered, therefore, though I was fit to fall down under the dead weight, she not being able to help herself, and having a deal of beef in her skin for an old woman of eighty; but I got a lean, by squeezing her a wee between me and the wall.

I thought they would never have come, for my shoeless feet were all bruised, and bleeding from the crunched lime and the splinters of broken stones; but at long and last a ladder was hoisted up, and having fastened a kinch of ropes beneath her oxters, I let her slide down over the upper step, by way of a pillyshee, having the satisfaction of seeing her safely landed in the arms of seven old wives that were waiting with a cosey warm blanket below. Having accomplished this grand manœuvre, wherein I succeeded in saving the precious life of a woman of eighty, that had been four long years bedridden, I tripped down the steps myself like a nine-year-old, and had the pleasure, when the roof fell in, to know that I for one had done my duty, and that, to the best of my knowledge, no living creature except the poor cat had perished within the jaws of the devouring element.

But bide a wee; the work was as yet only half done. The fire was still roaring and raging, every puff of wind that blew through the black firmament driving the red sparks high into the air, where they died away like the tail of a comet or the train of a sky-rocket; the joisting crazing,

cracking, and tumbling down, and now and then the bursting cans playing flee in a hundred flinders from the chimney-heads. One would have naturally enough thought that our engine could have drowned out a fire of any kind whatsoever in half a second, scores of folks driving about with pitcherfuls of water, and scaling half of it on one another and the causey in their hurry; but, woe's me! it did not play puh on the red-hot stones, that whizzed like iron in a smiddy trough; so, as soon as it was darkness and smoke in one place, it was fire and fury in another.

My anxiety was great. Seeing that I had done my best for my neighbours, it behoved me now, in my turn, to try and see what I could do for myself; so, notwithstanding the remonstrances of my friend James Batter—whom Nause, knowing I had bare feet, had sent out to seek me with a pair of shoon in his hand, and who, in scratching his head, mostly rugged out every hair of his wig with sheer vexation—I ran off, and mounted the ladder a second time, and succeeded, after muckle speeling, in getting upon the top of the wall, where, having a bucket slung up to me by means of a rope, I swashed down such showers on the top of the flames that I soon did more good, in the space of five minutes, than the engine and the ten men that were all in a broth of perspiration with pumping it, did the whole night over—to say nothing of the multitude of drawers of water, men, wives, and weans, with their cuddies, leglins, pitchers, pails, and water-stoups; having the satisfaction, in a short time, to observe everything getting as black as the crown of my hat, and the gable of my own house becoming as cool as a cucumber.

Being a man of method and acquainted with business, I could have liked to have given a finishing stitch to my work before descending the ladder; but, losh me! sic a whingeing, girning, greeting, and roaring got up all of a sudden, as was never seen or heard of since bowed Joseph raised the meal-mob and burned Johnnie Wilkes in effigy; and looking down, I saw Benjie, the bairn of my own heart, and the callant Glen, my apprentice on trial, that had both been as sound as tops till this blessed moment, standing in their night-gowns and their little red cowls, rubbing their eyes, cowering with cold and fright, and making an awful uproar,

crying on me to come down and not be killed. The voice of Benjie especially pierced through and through my heart like a two-edged sword, and I could on no manner of account suffer myself to bear it any longer, as I jealoused the bairn would have gone into convulsion-fits if I had not heeded him; so, making a sign to them to be quiet, I came my ways down, taking hold of one in ilka hand, which must have been a fatherly sight to the spectators that saw us. After waiting on the crown of the causey for half an hour, to make sure that the fire was extinguished, and all tight and right, I saw the crowd scaling, and thought it best to go in too, carrying the two youngsters along with me. When I began to move off, however, siccan a cheering of the multitude got up as would have deafened a cannon; and though I say it myself, who should not say it, they seemed struck with a sore amazement at my heroic behaviour, following me with loud cheers even to the threshold of my own door.

From this folk should condescend to take a lesson, seeing that, though the world is a bitter bad world, yet that good deeds are not only a reward to themselves, but call forth the applause of Jew and Gentile; for the sweet savour of my conduct on this memorable night remained in my nostrils for goodness knows the length of time, many praising my brave humanity in public companies and assemblies of the people, such as strawberry ploys, council meetings, dinner-parties, and so forth; and many in private conversation at their own ingle-cheek, by way of two-handed crack; in stage-coach confab; and in causey talk in the forenoon, before going in to take their meridians. Indeed, between friends, the business proved in the upshot of no small advantage to me, bringing to me a sowd of strange faces, by way of customers, both gentle and semple, that I verily believe had not so muckle as ever heard of my name before, and giving me many a coat to cut and cloth to shape, that, but for my gallant behaviour on the fearsome night aforesaid, would doubtless have been cut, sewed, and shaped by other hands. Indeed, considering the great noise the thing made in the world, it is no wonder that every one was anxious to have a garment of wearing apparel made by the individual same hands that had succeeded, under Providence, in saving the

precious life of an old woman of eighty, that had been bed-ridden, some say four years come Yule, and others come Martinmas.

When we got to the ingle-side, and, barring the door, saw that all was safe, it was now three in the morning; so we thought it by much the best way of managing not to think of sleeping any more, but to be on the look-out—as we aye used to be when walking sentry in the volunteers—in case the flames should, by ony mischancy accident or other, happen to break out again. My wife blamed my hardihood muckle, and the rashness with which I had ventured at once to places where even masons and sclaters were afraid to put foot on; yet I saw in the interim that she looked on me with a prouder eye—knowing herself the helpmate of one that had courageously risked his neck and every bone in his skin in the cause of humanity. I saw this as plain as a pikestaff, as, with one of her kindest looks, she insisted on my putting on a better happing to screen me from the cold, and on my taking something comfortable inwardly towards the dispelling of bad consequences. So, after half a minute's stand-out by way of refusal like, I agreed to a cupful of het-pint, as I thought it would be a thing Mungo Glen might never have had the good fortune to have tasted; and as it might operate by way of a cordial on the callant Benjie, who kept aye smally, and in a dwining way. No sooner said than done—and off Nanse brushed in a couple of hurries to make the het-pint.

After the small beer was put into the pan to boil, we found, to our great mortification, that there were no eggs in the house; and Benjie was sent out with a candle to the hen-house, to see if any of the hens had laid since gloaming, and fetch what he could get. In the middle of the meantime, I was expatiating to Mungo on what taste it would have, and how he had never seen anything finer than it would be, when in ran Benjie, all out of breath, and his face as pale as a dishclout.

“What’s the matter, Benjie—what’s the matter?” said I to him, rising up from my chair in a great hurry of a fright. “Has onybody killed ye? or is the fire broken out again? or has the French landed? or have ye seen a ghost? or are——”

“Eh, crifty!” cried Benjie, coming till his speech, “they’re a’ aff—cock and hens and ‘a’,—there’s naething left but the rotten nest-egg in the corner!”

This was an awful dispensation, of which more hereafter. In the midst of the desolation of the fire—such is the depravity of human nature—some ne’er-do-weels had taken advantage of my absence to break open the hen-house door; and our whole stock of poultry, the cock along with our seven hens—two of them tappit and one muffed—were carried away bodily, stoop and roop.

On this subject, howsoever, I shall say no more in this chapter, but merely observe in conclusion, that, as to our het-pint, we were obligated to make the best of a bad bargain, making up with whisky what it wanted in eggs,—though our banquet could not be called altogether a merry one, the joys of our escape from the horrors of the fire being damped, as it were, by a wet blanket, on account of the nefarious pillaging of our hen-house.

CHAPTER XX.

ADVENTURES IN THE SPORTING LINE.

“A fig for them by law protected,
Liberty’s a glorious feast;
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.”—*Jolly Beggars.*

“Wi’ cauk and keel I’ll win your bread,
And spindles and whorles for them wha need,
Whilk is a gentle trade indeed,
To carry the Gaberlunzie on.
I’ll bow my leg and crook my knee,
And draw a black clout owre my ee,
A’cripple or blind they will ca’ me,
While we shall be merry and sing.”—*KING JAMES V.*

The situation of me and my family at this time affords an example of the truth of the old proverb, that “ae evil never comes its lane;” being no sooner quit of our dread concerning the burning, than we were doomed by Providence to undergo the disaster of the rookery of our hen-house. I

believe I have mentioned the number of our stock—to wit, a cock and seven hens, eight in all; but I neglected, on account of their size, or somehow overlooked, the two bantams, than which two more neat or curiouser-looking creatures were not to be seen in the whole country-side. The hennie was quite a conceit of a thing, and laid an egg not muckle bigger than my thimble; while, for its size, the bit he-ane was, for spirit in the fechtin line, a perfect wee cleevil incarnate.

Most fortunately for my family in this matter, it so happened that, by paying in half-a-crown a-year, I was a regular member of a society for prosecuting all whom it might concern, that dabbled with foul fingers in the sinful and lawless trade of thievery, breaking the eighth commandment at no allowance, and drawing on their heads not only the passing punishments of this world, by way of banishment to Botany Bay, or hanging at the Luckenbooths, but the threatened vengeance of one that will last for ever and ever.

Accordingly, putting on my hat about nine o'clock or thereabouts, when the breakfast things were removing from the bit table, I popped out, in the first and foremost instance, to take a vizzy of the depredation the flames had made in our neighbourhood. Losh keep us all, what a spectacle of wreck and ruination! The roof was clean off and away, as if a thunderbolt from heaven had knocked it down through the two floors, carrying everything before it like a perfect whirlwind. Nought were standing but black, bare walls, a perfect picture of desolation; some with the bit pictures on nails still hanging up where the rooms were like; and others with old coats hanging on pins; and empty bottles in boles, and so on. Indeed, Jacob Glowr, who was standing by my side with his specs on, could see, as plain as a pikestaff, a tea-kettle still on the fire, in the hearthplace of one of the gable garrets, where Miss Jenny Withershins lived, but happened luckily, at the era of the conflagration, to be away to Prestonpans, on a visit to some of her far-away cousins, providentially, for her safety, grievously, at that very time, smitten with the sciatics.

Having satisfied my eyes with a daylight view of the terrible devastation, I went away leisurely up the street with

my hands in my breeches-pockets, comparing the scene in my mind with the downfall of Babylon the Great, and Sodom and Gomorrah, and Tyre and Sidon, and Jerusalem, and all the lave of the great towns that had fallen to decay, according to the foretelling of the sacred prophets, until I came to the door of Donald Gleig, the head of the Thief Society, to whom I related, from beginning to end, the whole business of the hen-stealing. 'Od he was a mettle bodie of a creature—far north, Aberdeen-awa like, and looking at two sides of a halfpenny ; but, to give the devil his due, in this instance he behaved to me like a gentleman. Not only did Donald send through the drum in the course of half an hour, offering a reward of three guineas for the apprehension of the offenders, names concealed, but he got a warrant granted to Francie Deep, the sherry-officer, to make search in the houses of several suspicious persons.

The reward offered by tuck of drum failed, nobody making application to the crier ; but the search succeeded—as, after turning everything topsy-turvy, the feathers were found in a bag, in the house of an old woman of vile character, who contrived to make out a way of living by hiring beds at twopence a-night to Eirish travellers—south-country packmen—sturdy beggars, men and women, and weans of them—Yetholm tinklers—wooden-legged sailors without Chelsea pensions—dumb spaewomen—keepers of wild-beast shows—dancing-dog folk—spunk-makers, and suchlike pickpockets. The thing was as plain as the loof of my hand ; for, besides great suspicion, what was more, was the finding the head of the muffed hen, to which I could have sworn, lying in a bye-corner ; the body itself not being so kenspeckle in its disjasket state—as it hung twirling in a string by its legs before the fire, all buttered over with swine's seam, and half roasted.

After some little ado, and having called in two men that were passing to help us to take them prisoners, in case of their being refractory, we carried them by the lug and the horn before a justice of peace.

Except the fact of the stolen goods being found in their possession, it so chanced, ye observe, that we had no other sort of evidence whatsoever ; but we took care to examine them one at a time, the one not hearing what the other said ;

so, by dint of cross-questioning by one who well knew how to bring fire out of flint, we soon made the guilty convict themselves, and brought the transaction home to two wauf-looking fellows that we had got smoking in a corner. From the speerings that were put to them during their examination, it was found that they tried to make a way of doing by swindling folks at fairs by the game of the garter. Indeed, it was stupid of me not to recognise their faces at first sight, having observed both of them loitering about our back bounds the afternoon before, and one of them, the tall one with the red head and fustian jacket, having been in my shop in the fore-part of the night, about the gloaming like, asking me as a favour for a yard or two of spare runds or selvages.

I have aye heard that seeing is believing; and that youth might take a warning from the punishment that sooner or later is ever tacked to the tail of crime, I took Benjie and Mungo to hear the trial,—and two more rueful faces than they put on, when they looked at the culprits, were never seen since Adam was a boy. It was far different with the two Eirishers, who showed themselves so hardened by a long course of sin and misery, that, instead of abasing themselves in the face of a magistrate, they scarcely almost gave a civil answer to a single question which was speered at them. Howsoever, they paid for that at a heavy ransom, as ye shall hear by-and-by.

Having been kept all night in the cold tolbooth on bread and water, without either coal or candle to warm their toes or let them see what they were doing, they were harled out amid an immense crowd of young and old, more especially wives and weans, at eleven o'clock on the next forenoon, to the endurance of a punishment which ought to have afflicted them almost as muckle as that of death itself.

When the key of the jail-door was thrawn, and the two loons brought out, there was a bumming of wonder, and maybe sorrow, among the terrible crowd, to see fellow-creatures so left alone to themselves as to have robbed an honest man's hen-house at the dead hour of night, when a fire was bleezing next door, and the howl of desolation sougning over the town like a visible judgment. One of them, as I said before, had a red pow and a foraging-cap, with a black nap-

kin roppined round his weasand ; a jean jacket with six pockets, and square tails ; a velveteen waistcoat with plated buttons ; corduroy breeches buttoned at the knees ; rig-and-fur stockings ; and heavy, clanking wooden clogs. The other—who was little and round-shouldered, with a bull-neck and bushy black whiskers, just like a shoebrush stuck to each cheek of his head, as if he had been a travelling agent for Macassar—had on a low-crowned, plated beaver-hat, with the end of a peacock's feather stuck in the band ; a long-tailed old black coat, as brown as a berry, and as bare as my loof, to say nothing of being out at both elbows. His trousers, I daresay, had once been nankeen ; but as they did not appear to have seen the washing-tub for a season or two, it would be rash to give any decided opinion on that head. In short, they were two awful-like ragamuffins.

Women, however, are aye sympathising and merciful ; so, as I was standing among the crowd, as they came down the tolbooth-stair, chained together by the cuffs of the coat, one said, "Wae's me ! what a weel-faur'd fellow, wi' the red head, to be found guilty of stealing folk's hen-houses." And another one said, "Hech, sirs ! what a bonny blackaviced man that little ane is, to be paraded through the streets for a warld's wonder !" But I said nothing, knowing the thing was just, and a wholesome example ; holding Benjie on my shoulder to see the poukit hens tied about their necks like keeking-glasses. But, puh ! the fellows did not give one pinch of snuff ; so off they set, and in this manner were drummed through the bounds of the parish, a constable walking at each side of them with Lochaber axes, and the town-drummer row-de-dowing the thief's march at their backs. It was a humbling sight.

My heart was sorrowful, notwithstanding the ills they had done me and mine by the nefarious pillaging of our hen-house, to see two human creatures, of the same flesh and blood as myself, undergoing the righteous sentence of the law, in a manner so degrading to themselves and so pitiful to all that beheld them. But nevertheless, considering what they had done, they neither deserved, nor did they seem to care for commiseration, holding up their brazen faces as if they had been taking a pleasure-walk for the benefit of their health, and the poukit hens, that dangled before them,

ornaments of their bravery. The whole crowd, young and old, followed them from one end of the town to the other, liking to ding one another over, so anxious were they to get a sight of what was going on ; but when they came to the gate-end, they stopped and gave the ne'er-do-weels three cheers. What think you did the ne'er-do-weels do in return ? Fie shame ! they took off their old scrapers and gave a huzza too ; clapping their hands behind them, in a manner as deplorable to relate as it was shocking to behold.

Their chains—the things, ye know, that held their cuffs together—were by this time taken off, along with the poukit hens, which I fancy the town-offishers took home and cooked for their dinner : so they shook hands with the drummer, wishing him a good day and a pleasant walk home, brushing away on the road to Edinburgh, where their wives and weans, who had no doubt made a good supper on the spuilzie of the hens, had gone away before, maybe to have something comfortable for their arrival, their walk being likely to give them an appetite.

Had they taken away all the rest of the hens, and only left the bantams, on which they must have found but desperate little eating, and the muffed one, I would have cared less—it being from several circumstances a pet one in the family, having been brought in a blackbird's cage by the carrier from Lauder, from my wife's mother, in a present to Benjie on his birthday. The creature almost grat himself blind when he heard of our having seen it roasting in a string by the legs before the fire, and found its bonny muffed head in a corner.

But let alone likings, the callant was otherwise a loser in its death, she having regularly laid a caller egg to him every morning, which he got along with his tea and bread, to the no small benefit of his health, being, as I have taken occasion to remark before, far from robusteous in the constitution. I am sure I know one thing, and that is, that I would have willingly given the loons a crown-piece to have preserved it alive, hen though it was of my own ; but no—the bloody deed was over and done before we were aware that the poor thing's life was sacrificed.

The names of the two Eirishers were John Dochart and Dennis Flint, both, according to their own deponement,

from the county of Tipperary; and weel-a-wat the place has no great credit in producing two such bairns. Often, after that, did I look through that part of the Advertiser newspapers that has a list of all the accidents, and so on, just above the births, marriages, and deaths, which I liked to read regularly. Howsoever, it was two years before I discovered their names again, having, it seems, during a great part of that period, lived under the forged name of Alias; and I saw that they were both shipped off at Leith, for transportation to some country called the Hulks, for being habit and repute thieves, and for having made a practice of coining bad silver. The thing, however, that condemned them, was for having knocked down a drunk man, in a beastly state of intoxication, on the king's highway in broad daylight; and having robbed him of his hat, wig, and neckcloth, an upper and under vest, a coat and greatcoat, a pair of Hessian boots which he had on his legs, a silver watch with four brass seals and a key, besides a snuff-box made of boxwood, with an invisible hinge, one of the Laurencekirk breed, a pair of specs, some odd halfpennies, and a Camperdown pocket-napkin.

But of all months of the year—or maybe, indeed, of my blessed lifetime—this one was the most adventurous. It seemed, indeed, as if some especial curse of Providence hung over the canny town of Dalkeith; and that, like the great cities of the plain, we were at long and last to be burnt up from the face of the earth with a shower of fire and brimstone.

Just three days after the drumming of the two Eirish ne'er-do-weels, a deaf and dumb woman came in prophesying at our back door, offering to spae fortunes. She was tall and thin, an unco witch-looking creature, with a runckled brow, sunburnt haffits, and two sharp piercing eyes, like a hawk's, whose glance went through ye like the cut and thrust of a two-edged sword. On her head she had a tawdry brownish-black bonnet, that had not improved from two three years' tholing of sun and wind; a thin rag of a grey duffle mantle was thrown over her shoulders, below which was a checked shortgown of gingham stripe, and a green glazed manco petticoat. Her shoon were terrible bauchles, and her grey worsted stockings, to hide the holes in them,

were all dragooned down about her heels. On the whole, she was rather, I must confess, an out-of-the-way creature; and though I had not muckle faith in these bodies that pretend to see further through a millstone than their neighbours, I somehow or other, taking pity on her miserable condition, being still a fellow-creature, though plain in the lugs, had not the heart to huff her out; more by token, as Nanse, Benjie, and the new prentice Mungo had by this time got round me, all dying to know what grand fortunes waited them in the years of their after pilgrimage. Sinful creatures that we are! not content with the insight into its ways that Providence affords us, but diving beyond our deeps, only to flounder into the whirlpools of error. Is it not clear, that had it been for our good, all things would have been revealed to us? and is it not as clear, that not a wink of sound sleep would we ever have got, had all the ills that have crossed our paths been ranged up before our een, like great black towering mountains of darkness? How could we have found contentment in our goods and gear, if we saw them melting from us next year like snow from a dyke? how could we sit down on the elbow-chair of ease, could we see the misfortunes that may make next week a black one? or how could we look a kind friend in the face without tears, could we see him, ere a month maybe was gone, lying streiked beneath his winding-sheet, his eyes closed for evermore, and his mirth hushed to an awful silence? No, no, let us rest content that Heaven decrees what is best for us: let us do our duty as men and Christians, and everything, both here and hereafter, will work together for our good.

Having taken a piece of chalk out of her big, greasy, leather pouch, she wrote down on the table, "Your wife, your son, and your prentice." This was rather curious, and every one of them, a wee thunderstruck like, cried out as they held up their hands, "Losh me! did onybody ever see or hear tell of the like o' that? She's no canny!" It was gey droll, I thought; and I was aware from the Witch of Endor, and sundry mentions in the Old Testament, that things out of the course of nature have more than once been permitted to happen; so I reckoned it but right to give the poor woman a fair hearing, as she deserved.

"Oh!" said Nanse to me, "ye ken our Benjie's eight year auld; see if she kens; ask her how old he is."

I had scarcely written down the question when she wrote beneath it, "The bonny laddie, your only son, is eight year old: he'll be an admiral yet."

"An admiral!" said his mother; "that's gey and extraordinary. I never kenned he had only inkling for the sea-faring line; and I thought, Mansie, you intended bringing him up to your ain trade. But, howsoever, ye're wrong, ye see. I tell't ye he wad either make a spoon or spoil a horn. I tell't ye, ower and ower again, that he would be either something or naething; what think ye o' that noo? See if she kens that Mungo comes from the country; and where the Lammermoor hills is."

When I had put down the question, in a jiffie she wrote down beside it, "That boy comes from the high green hills, and his name is Mungo."

Dog on it! this astonished us more and more, and fairly bamboozled my understanding, as I thought there surely must be some league and paction with the Old One; but the further in the deeper. She then pointed to my wife, writing down, "Your name is Nancy"—and turning to me, as she made some dumbie signs, she chalked down, "Your name is Mansie Wauch; that saved the precious life of an old bedridden woman from the fire, and will soon get a lottery ticket of twenty thousand pounds."

Knowing the truth of the rest of what she had said, I could not help jumping on the floor with joy, and seeing that she was up to everything, as plain as if it had happened in her presence. The good news set us all a skipping like young lambs, my wife and the laddies clapping their hands as if they had found a fiddle; so, jealousying they might lose their discretion in their mirth, I turned round to the three, holding up my hand, and saying, "In the name o' Gude-ness, dinna mention this to ony leeving sowl, as, mind ye, I havena taken out the ticket yet. The doing so might not only set them to the sinful envying of our good fortune, as forbidden in the tenth commandment, but might lead away ourselves to be gutting our fish before we get them."

"Mind, then," said Nanse, "about your promise to me concerning the silk gown and the pair——"

"Wheest, wheest, gudewife," answered I. "There's a braw time coming. We must not be in ower great a hurry."

I then bade the woman sit down by the ingle cheek, and our wife to give her a piece of cold beef and a shave of bread, besides twopence out of my own pocket. Some, on hearing siccan sums mentioned, would have immediately struck work, but even in the height of my grand expectations I did not forget the old saying, that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;" and being thrang with a pair of leggins for Eben Bowsie, I brushed away ben to the workshop, thinking the woman, or witch, or whatever she was, would have more freedom and pleasure in eating by herself. That she had, I am now bound to say by experience.

Two days after, when we were sitting at our comfortable four-hours, in came little Benjie, running out of breath—just at the dividual moment of time my wife and me were jeering one another about how we would behave when we came to be grand ladies and gentlemen, keeping a flunkie maybe—to tell us that when he was playing at the bools on the plainstones before the old kirk, he had seen the deaf and dumb spaewife harled away to the tolbooth for stealing a pair of trousers that were hanging drying on a tow in Juden Elshinder's back close. I could scarcely credit the callant, though I knew he would not tell a lie for sixpence; and I said to him, "Now be sure, Benjie, before ye speak. The tongue is a dangerous weapon, and apt to bring folk into trouble—it might be another woman."

It was real cleverality in the callant. He said, "Ay, faither, but it was her; and she contrived to bring herself into trouble without a tongue at a'."

I could not help laughing at this, it showed Benjie to be such a genius; so he said—

"Ye needna laugh, faither; for it's as true's death it was her. Do you think I didna ken in a minute our cheese-toaster that used to hing beside the kitchen fire, and that the sherry-offisher took out frae beneath her grey-cloak?"

The smile went off Nanse's cheek like lightning, and she said it could not be true; but she would go to the kitchen to see. P'fegs it was too true; for she never came back to tell the contrary.

This was really and truly a terrible business, but the truth for all that ; the cheese-toaster casting up not an hour after, in the hands of Daniel Search, to whom I gave a dram. The loss of the tin cheese-toaster would have been a trifle, especially as it was broken in the handle—but this was an awful blow to the truth of the thieving dumbie's grand prophecy. Nevertheless, it seemed at the time gey puzzling to me, to think how a deaf and dumb woman, unless she had some wonderful gift, could have told us what she did.

On the next day, the Friday, I think, that story was also made as clear as daylight to us ; for being banished out of the town as a common thief and vagabond, down on the Musselburgh road, by order of a justice of the peace, it was the bounden duty of Daniel Search and Geordie Sharp to see her safe past the kennel, the length of Smeaton. They then tried to make her understand by writing on the wall that if ever again she was seen or heard tell of in the town, she would be banished to Botany Bay ; but she had a great fight, it seems, to make out Daniel's bad spelling, he having been very ill yedicated, and no deacon at the pen.

Howsoever, they got her to understand their meaning by giving her a shove forward by the shoulders, and aye pointing down to Inveresk. Thinking she did not hear them, they then took upon themselves the liberty of calling her some ill names, and bade her good-day as a bad one. But she was upsides with them for acting in that respect above their commission ; for she wheeled round again to them, and, snapping her fingers at their noses, gave a curse, and bade them go home for a couple of dirty Scotch vermin.

The two men were perfectly dumfounded at hearing the tongue-tied wife speaking as good English as themselves, and could not help stopping to look after her for a long way on the road, as every now and then she stuck one of her arms akimbo in her side, and gave a dance round in the whirling-jig way, louping like daft, and lilting like a grey-lintie. From her way of speaking, they also saw immediately that she too was an Eirisher. They must be a bonny family when they are all at home.

CHAPTER XXI.

ANENT MUNGO GLEN.

“ ‘ Earth to earth,’ and ‘ dust to dust,’
The solemn priest hath said,
So we lay the turf above thee now,
And we seal thy narrow bed;
But thy spirit, brother, soars away . .
Among the faithful blest,
Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at rest.”—MILMAN.

Perhaps, since I was born, I do not remember such a string of casualties as happened to me and mine all within the period of one short fortnight. To say nothing connected with the play-acting business, which was immediately before—first came Mungo Glen’s misfortune with regard to the blood-soiling of the new nankeen trousers, the foremost of his transactions and a bad omen—next, the fire, and all its wonderfuls, the saving of the old bedridden woman’s precious life, and the destruction of the poor cat—syne the robbery of the hen-house by the Eirish ne’er-do-weels, who paid so sweetly for their pranks—and lastly, the hoax, the thieving of the cheese-toaster without the handle, and the banishment of the spaewife.

These were awful signs of the times, and seemed to say that the world was fast coming to a finis—the ends of the earth appearing to have combined in a great Popish plot of villany. Every man that had a heart to feel, must have trembled amid these threatening, judgment-like, and calamitous events. As for my own part, the depravity of the nations which most of these scenes showed me, I must say, fell heavily upon my spirit; and I could not help thinking of the old cities of the plain, over the house-tops of which, for their heinous sins and iniquitous abominations, the wrath of the Almighty showered down fire and brimstone from heaven, till the very earth melted and swallowed them up for ever and ever.

These added to the number, to be sure; but not that I had never before seen signs and wonders in my time. I had seen the friends of the people,—and the scarce years,—

and the bloody gulleeteening over-bye among the French blackguards,—and the business of Watt and Downie nearer home, at our own doors almost, in Edinburgh like,—and the calling out of the volunteers,—and divers sea-fights at Camperdown and elsewhere,—and land battles countless,—and the American war, part o't,—and awful murders,—and mock fights in the Duke's parks,—and highway robberies,—and breakings of all the Ten Commandments, from the first to the last ; so that, allowing me to have had but a common spunk of reflection, I must, like others, have cast a wistful eye on the ongoings of men : and, if I had not strength to pour out my inward lamentations, I could not help thinking, with fear and trembling, at the rebellion of such a worm as man against a Power whose smallest word could extinguish his existence, and blot him out in a twinkling from the roll of living things.

But if I was much affected, the callant Mungo was a great deal more. From the days in which he had lain in his cradle, he had been brought up in a remote and quiet part of the country, far from the bustling of towns, and from man encountering man in the stramash of daily life ; so that his heart seemed to pine within him like a flower, for want of the blessed morning dew ; and, like a bird that has been caught in a girn among the winter snows, his appetite failed him, and he fell away from his meat and clothes.

I was vexed exceedingly to see the callant in this dilemmy, for he was growing very tall and thin, his chaft-blades being lank and white, and his eyes of a hollow drumliness, as if he got no refreshment from the slumbers of the night. Beholding all this work of destruction going on in silence, I spoke to his friend Mrs Grassie about him, and she was so motherly as to offer to have a glass of port-wine, stirred with best jesuit's barks, ready for him every forenoon at twelve o'clock ; for really nobody could be but interested in the laddie, he was so gentle and modest, making never a word of complaint, though melting like snow off a dyke ; and though he must have suffered both in body and mind, enduring all with a silent composure worthy of a holy martyr.

Perceiving things going on from bad to worse, I thought it was best to break the matter to him, as he was never like to speak himself ; and I asked him in a friendly way,

as we were sitting together on the board finishing a pair of fustian overalls for Maister Bob Bustle—a riding clerk for one of the Edinburgh spirit shops, but who liked aye to have his clothes of the Dalkeith cut, having been born, bred, and educated in our town, like his forbears before him—if there was anything the matter with him, that he was aye so dowie and heartless? Never shall I forget the look he gave me as he lifted up his eyes, in which I could see visible distress painted as plain as the figures of the saints on old kirk windows; but he told me, with a faint smile, that he had nothing particular to complain of, only that he would have liked to have died among his friends, as he could not live from home, and away from the life he had been accustomed to all his days.

'Od, I was touched to the quick; and when I heard him speaking of death in such a calm, quiet way, I found something, as if his words were words of prophecy, and as if I had seen a sign that told me he was not to be long for this world. Howsoever, I hope I had more sense than to let this be seen, so I said to him, "Ou, if that be a', Mungo, ye'll soon come to like us a' well enough. Ye should take a stout heart, man; and when your prenticeship's done, ye'll gang hame and set up for a great man, making coats for all the lords and lairds in broad Lammermoor."

"Na, na," answered the callant with a trembling voice, which mostly made my heart swell to my mouth, and brought the tear to my eye, "I'll never see the end of my prenticeship, nor Lammermoor again."

"Hout touts, man," quo I, "never speak in that sort o' way; it's distrustfu' and hurtful. Live in hope, though we should die in despair. When ye go home again, ye'll be as happy as ever."

"Eh na—never, never, even though I was to gang hame the morn. I'll never be as I was before. I lived and lived on, never thinking that such days were to come to an end—but now I find it can, and must be otherwise. The thoughts of my heart have been broken in upon, and nothing can make whole what has been shivered to pieces."

This was to the point, as Dannie Thummel said to his needle; so just for speaking's sake, and to rouse him up a bit, I said, "Keh, man, what need ye care sae muckle about

the country ? It'll never be like our bonny streets, with all the braw shop-windows, and the auld kirk ; and the stands with the horn-spoons and luggies ; and all the carts on the market-days ; and the Duke's gate, and so on."

"Ay, but, maister," answered Mungo, "ye was never brought up in the country—ye never kent what it was to wander about in the simmer glens, wi' naething but the warm sun looking down on ye, the blue waters streaming ower the braes, the birds singing, and the air like to grow sick wi' the breath of blooming birks, and flowers of all colours, and wild-thyme sticking full of bees, humming in joy and thankfulness ! Ye never kent, maister, what it was to wake in the still morning, when, looking out, ye saw the snaws lying for miles round about ye on the hills, breast deep, shutting ye out from the world, as it were ; the foot of man never coming during the storm to your door, nor the voice of a stranger heard from ae month's end till the ither. See, it is coming on o' hail the now, and my mother, with my sister—I have but ane—and my four brithers, will be looking out into the drift, and missing me away for the first time frae their fireside. They'll hae a dreary winter o't, breaking their hearts for me—their ballants and their stories will never be sae funny again—and my heart is breaking for them."

With this, the tears prap-prapped down his cheeks, but his pride bade him turn his head round to hide them from me. A heart of stone would have felt for him.

I saw it was in vain to persist long, as the laddie was falling out of his clothes as fast as leaves from the November tree ; so I wrote home by limping Jamie the carrier, telling his father the state of things, and advising him, as a matter of humanity, to take his son out to the free air of the hills again, as the town smoke did not seem to agree with his stomach ; and, as he might be making a sticked tailor of one who was capable of being bred a good farmer—no mortal being likely to make a great progress in any thing unless the heart goes with the handiwork.

Some folks will think I acted right, and others wrong in this matter ; if I erred, it was on the side of mercy, and my conscience does not upbraid me for the transaction. In due course of time I had an answer from Mr Glen ; and we got

every thing ready and packed up, against the hour that Jamie was to set out again.

Mungo got himself all dressed ; and Benjie had taken such a liking to him, that I thought he would have grutten himself senseless when he heard he was going away back to his own home. One would not have imagined that such a sincere friendship could have taken root in such a short time ; but the bit creature Benjie was as warm-hearted a callant as ye ever saw. Mungo told him, that if he would not cry he would send him in a present of a wee ewe-milk cheese whenever he got home ; which promise pacified him, and he asked me if Benjie would come out for a month gin simmer, when he would let him see all worthy observation along the country-side.

When we had shaken hands with Mungo, and, after fastening his comforter about his neck, wished him a good journey, we saw him mounted on the front of limping Jamie's cart ; and as he drove away, I must confess my heart was grit. I could not help running up the stair, and pulling up the fore-window to get a long look after him. Away and away they wore ; in a short time the cart took a turn and disappeared ; and when I drew down the window, and sauntered, with my arms crossed, back to the workshop, something seemed amissing, and the snug wee place, with its shapings, and runds, and paper-measurings, and its bit fire, seemed in my eyes to look douff and gousty.

Whether in the joggging of the cart, or what else I cannot say, but it's an unco story ; for on the road, it turned out that poor Mungo was seized with a terrible pain in his side, and, growing worse and worse, was obliged to be left at Lauder, in the care of a decent widow woman that had a blind eye, and a room to let furnished.

It was not for two-three days that we learnt these awful tidings, which greatly distressed us all ; and I gave the driver of the Lauder coach threepence to himself to bring us word every morning, as he passed the door, how the laddie was going on.

I learned shortly that his father and mother had arrived, which was one comfort ; but that matters with poor Mungo were striding on from bad to worse, being pronounced, by a skeely doctor, to be in a galloping consumption, and not

able to be removed home, a thing that the laddie freaked and pined for night and day. At length, hearing for certain that he had not long to live, I thought myself bound to be at the expense of taking a ride out on the top of the coach, though I was aware of the danger of the machine's whiles coupling, if it were for no more than to bid him fare-ye-weel—and I did so.

It was a cold cloudy day in February, and everything on the road looked dowie and cheerless; the very cows and sheep, that crowded cowering beneath the trees in the parks, seemed to be grieving for some disaster, and hanging down their heads like mourners at a burial. The rain whiles obliged me to put up my umbrella, and there was nobody on the top beside me save a deaf woman, that aye said "ay" to every question I speered, and with whom I found it out of the power of man to carry on any rational conversation; so I was obliged to sit glowering from side to side at the bleak bare fields—and the plashing grass—and the gloomy dull woods—and the gentlemen's houses, of which I knew not the names—and the fearful rough hills, that put me in mind of the wilderness, and of the abomination of desolation mentioned in Scripture, I believe in Ezekiel. The errand I was going on, to be sure, helped to make me more sorrowful; and I could not think on human life without agreeing with Solomon, that "all was vanity and vexation of spirit."

At long and last, when we came to our journey's end, and I louped off the top of the coach, Maister Glen came out to the door, and bade me haste me if I wished to see Mungo breathing. Save us! to think that a poor young thing was to be taken away from life and the cheerful sun thus suddenly, and be laid in the cold damp mools, among the moudiewarts and the green banes, "where there is no work or device." But what will ye say there? it was the will of Him who knows best what is for His creatures, and to whom we should—and must submit. I was just in time to see the last row of his glazing een, that then stood still for ever, as he lay, with his face as pale as clay, on the pillow, his mother holding his hand, and sob-sobbing with her face leant on the bed, as if her hope was departed and her heart would break. I went round about, and took hold of the other one for a moment; but it was clammy, and growing

cold with the coldness of grim death. I could hear my heart beating ; but Mungo's heart stood still, like a watch that has run itself down. Maister Glen sat in the easy-chair, with his hand before his eyes, saying nothing, and shedding not a tear ; for he was a strong, little, blackaviced man, with a feeling heart, but with nerves of steel. The rain rattled on the window, and the smoke gave a swirl as the wind rummelled in the lum. The hour spoke to the soul, and the silence was worth twenty sermons.

They who would wish to know the real value of what we are all over-apt to prize in this world should have been there too, and learnt a lesson not soon to be forgotten. I put my hand in my coat-pocket for my napkin to give my eyes a wipe, but found it was away, and feared much I had dropped it on the road ; though in this I was happily mistaken, having, before I went to my bed, found that on my journey I had tied it over my neckcloth, to keep away sore throats.

It was a sad heart to us all, to see the lifeless creature in his white nightcap and eyes closed, lying with his yellow hair spread on the pillow ; and we went out, that the women-folk might cover up the looking-glass and the face of the clock, ere they proceeded to dress the body in its last clothes—clothes that would never need changing ; but when we were half down the stair, and I felt glad with the thoughts of getting to the fresh air, we were obliged to turn up again for a little, to let the man past that was bringing in the dead deal.

But why weave a long story out of the materials of sorrow ? or endeavour to paint feelings that have no outward sign, lying shut up within the sanctuary of the heart ? The grief of a father and a mother can only be conceived by them who, as fathers and mothers, have suffered the loss of their bairns, —a treasure more precious to nature than silver or gold, home to the land-sick sailor, or daylight to the blind man sitting beaking in the heat of the morning sun.

The coffin having been ordered to be got ready with all haste, two men brought it on their shoulders betimes on the following morning ; and it was a sight that made my blood run cold to see the dead corpse of poor Mungo, my own

prentice, hoisted up from the bed, and laid in his black-handled, narrow housie. All had taken their last looks, the lid was screwed down by means of screw-drivers, and I read the plate, which said, "Mungo Glen, aged 15." Alas! early was he cut off from among the living—a flower snapped in its spring blossom—and an awful warning to us all, sinful and heedless mortals, of the uncertainty of this state of being.

In the course of the forenoon Maister Glen's cart was brought to the door, drawn by two black horses with long tails and hairy feet, a tram one and a leader. Though the job shook my nerves, I could not refuse to give them a hand down the stair with the coffin, which had a fief-like smell of death and sawdust; and we got it fairly landed in the cart, among clean straw. I saw the clodhopper of a ploughman aye dighting his een with the sleeve of his big-coat.

The mother, Mistress Glen, a little fattish woman, and as fine a homely body as ye ever met with, but sorely distracted at this time by sorrow, sat at the head, with her bonnet drawn over her face, and her shawl thrown across her shoulders, being a blue and red spot on a white ground. It was a dismal-like-looking thing to see her sitting there, with the dead body of her son at her feet, and at the side of it his kist with his claes, on the top of which was tied—not being room for it in the inside like (for he had twelve shirts, and three pair of trousers, and a Sunday and every-day's coat, with stockings and other things)—his old white beaver hat, turned up behind, which he used to wear when he was with me. His Sunday's hat I did not see; but most likely it was in among his claes, to keep it from the rain, and preserved, no doubt, for the use of some of his little brothers, please God, when they grew up a wee bigger.

Seeing Maister Glen, who had cut his chin in shaving, in a worn-out disjasket state, mounted on his sheltie, I shook hands with them both; and, in my thoughtlessness, wished them "a good journey," knowing well what a sorrowful home-going it would be to them, and what their bairns would think when they saw what was lying in the cart beside their mother. On this the big ploughman, that

wore a broad blue bonnet and corduroy cutikins, with a grey big-coat slit up behind in the manner I commonly made for laddies, gave his long whip a crack, and drove off to the eastward.

It would be needless in me to waste precious time in relating how I returned to my own country, especially as I may be thankful that nothing particular happened, excepting the coach-wheels riding over an old dog that was lying sleeping on the middle of the road, and, poor brute, nearly got one of his fore-paws chacked off. The day was sharp and frosty, and all the passengers took a loup off at a yill-house, with a Highlandman on the sign of it, to get a dram, to gar them bear up against the cold; yet knowing what had but so lately happened, and having the fears of Maister Wiggie before my eyes, I had made a solemn vow within myself not to taste liquor for six months at least; nor would I here break my word, tho' much made a fool of by an Englisher, and a fou Eirisher, who sang all the road—contenting myself, in the best way I could, with a tumbler of strong beer and two butter-bakes.

It is an old proverb, and a true one, that there is no rest to the wicked; so when I got home, I found business crying out for me loudly, having been twice wanted to take the measure for suits of clothes. Of course, knowing that my two customers would be wearying, I immediately cut my stick to their houses, and promised without fail to have my work done against the next Sabbath. Whether from my hurry, or my grief for poor Mungo, or maybe from both, I found on the Saturday night, when the clothes were sent home on the arm of Tammie Bodkin, whom I was obliged to hire by way of foresman, that some awful mistake had occurred—the dress of the one having been made for the back of the other, the one being long and tall, the other thick and short; so that Maister Peter Pole's cuffs did not reach above half-way down his arms, and the tails ended at the small of the back, rendering him a perfect fright; while Maister Watty Firkin's new coat hung on him like a dreadnought, the sleeves coming over the nebs of his fingers, and the hainch buttons hanging down between his heels, making him resemble a mouse below a firloot. With some persuasion, however,

there being but small difference in the value of the cloths, the one being a West of England bottle-green, and the other a Manchester blue, I caused them to niffer, and hushed up the business, which, had they been obstreperous, would have made half the parish of Dalkeith stand on end.

After poor Mungo had been beneath the mools, I daresay a good month, Benjie, as he was one forenoon diverting himself dozing his top in the room where they slept, happened to drive it in below the bed, where, scrambling in on his hands and feet, he found a half-sheet of paper written over in Mungo's hand-writing, the which he brought to me ; and on looking over it, I found it jingled in metre like the Psalms of David.

Having no skeel in these matters, I sent up the close for James Batter, who, being a member of the fifteenpence a-quarter subscription book-club, had read a power of all sorts of things, sacred and profane. James, as he was humming it over with his specs on his beak, gave now and then a thump on his thigh, "Prime, prime, man ; fine, prime, good, capital !" and so on, which astonished me much, kenning who had written it—a callant that had slept with our Benjie, and could not have shaped a pair of leggins though we had offered him the crown of the three kingdoms.

Seeing what it was thought of by one who knew what was what, and could distinguish the difference between a B and a bull's foot, I judged it necessary for me to take a copy of it ; which, for the benefit of them that like poems, I do not scruple to tag to the tail of this chapter.

“ Oh, wad that my time were ower but,
 Wi' this wintry sleet and snaw,
 That I might see our house again
 I' the bonny birken shaw !—
 For this is no my ain life,
 And I peak and pine away
 Wi' the thochts o' hame, and the young flowers
 I' the glad green month o' May.

I used to wauk in the morning
 Wi' the loud sang o' the lark,
 And the whistling o' the ploughman lads
 As they gaed to their wark ;

I used to weir in the young lambs
Frae the tod and the roaring stream ;
But the warld is changed, and a' thing now
To me seems like a dream.

There are busy crowds around me
On ilka lang dull street ;
Yet, though sae mony surround me,
I kenna ane I meet.
And I think on kind, kent faces,
And o' blythe and cheery days,
When I wander'd out, wi' our ain folk,
Out-owre the simmer braes.

Wae's me, for my heart is breaking !
I think on my brithers sma',
And on my sister greeting,
When I came frae hame awa ;
And oh ! how my mither sobbit,
As she shook me by the hand,
When I left the door o' our auld house,
To come to this stranger land.

There's nae place like our ain hame ;
Oh, I wish that I was there !—
There's nae hame like our ain hame
To be met wi' ony where !—
And oh ! that I were back again
To our farm and fields so green ;
And heard the tongues o' my ain folk,
And was what I hae been !”

That's poor Mungo's poem—which I and James Batter, and the rest, think excellent, and not far short of Robert Burns himself, had he been spared. Some may judge otherwise, out of bad taste or ill nature ; but I would just thank them to write a better at their leisure.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE JUNE JAUNT.

" The lapwing lilteth o'er the lea,
With nimble wing she sporteth ;
By vows she'll flee from tree to tree
Where Philomel resorteth :
By break of day, the lark can say,
I'll bid you a good-morrow ;
I'll streik my wing, and mounting sing,
O'er Leader hauchs and Yarrow."

—NICOL BURN, *the Minstrel*.

After Tammie Bodkin had been working with me on the board for more than four years in the capacity of foresman, superintending the workshop department, together with the conduct and conversation of Joe Brecky, Walter Cuff, and Jack Thorl, my three bounden apprentices, I thought I might lippen him awee to try his hand in the shaping line, especially with the clothes of such of our customers as I knew were not very nice, provided they got enough of cutting from the Manchester manufacture, and room to shake themselves in. The upshot, however, proved to a moral certainty that such a length of tether is not chancey for youth, and that a master cannot be too much on the head of his own business.

It was in the pleasant month of June, sometime, maybe six or eight days, after the birthday of our good old King George the Third—for I recollect the withering branches of lily-oak and flowers still sticking up behind the signs and over the lamp-posts—that my respected acquaintance and customer, Peter Farrel the baker, to whom I have made many a good suit of pepper-and-salt clothes—which he preferred from their not dirtying so easily with the bake-house—called in upon me, requesting me, in a very pressing manner, to take a pleasure ride up with him the length of Roslin, in his good-brother's bit phieton, to eat a wheen strawberries and see how the forthcoming harvest was getting on.

That the offer was friendly admitted not of doubt, but I did not like to accept for two-three reasons ; among which

were, in the first place, my awareness of the danger of riding in such vehicles—having read sundry times in the newspapers of folk having been tumbled out of them, drunk or sober, head-foremost, and having got eyes knocked ben, skulls cloured, and collar-bones broken; and in the second place, the expense of feeding the horse, together with our finding ourselves in meat and drink during the journey—let alone tolls, strawberries and cream, bawbees to the waiter, the hostler, and what not. But let me speak the knock-him-down truth, and shame the de'il,—above all, I was afraid of being seen by my employers wheeling about on a work-day, like a gentleman, dressed out in my best, and leaving my business to mind itself as it best could.

Peter Farrel, however, being a man of determination, stuck to his text like a horse-leech; so after a great to-do, and considerable argle-bargling, he got me, by dint of powerful persuasion, to give him my hand on the subject. Accordingly, at the hour appointed, I popped up the back-loan with my stick in my hand—Peter having agreed to be waiting for me on the road-side a bit beyond the head of the town, near Gallows-hall toll. The cat should be let out of the pock by my declaring that Nanse, the goodwife, had also a finger in the pie—as, do what ye like, women will make their points good—she having overcome me in her wheedling way by telling me that it was curious I had no ambition to speel the ladder of gentility, and hold up my chin in imitation of my betters.

That we had a most beautiful drive I cannot deny; for though I would not allow Peter to touch the horse with the whip, in case it might run away, fling, or trot ower fast—and so we made but slow progress—little more even than walking; yet, as I told him, it gave a man leisure to use his eyes, and make observation to the right and the left; and so we had a prime look of Eskbank, and Newbottle Abbey, and Melville Castle, and Dalhousie, and Polton, and Hawthornden, and Dryden woods—and the powder-mills, the paper-mills, the bleachfield—and so on. The day was bright and beautiful, and the feeling of summer came over our bosoms; the flowers blossomed and the birds sang; and as the sun looked from the blue sky, the quiet of nature banished from our thoughts all the poor and paltry cares that embitter life,

and all the pitiful considerations which are but too apt to be the only concerns of the busy and bustling, from their awaking in the morning to their lying down on the pillow of evening rest. Peter and myself felt this forcibly,—he, as he confessed to me, having entirely forgot the four pan-soled loaves that were that morning left by his laddie, Peter Crust, in the oven, and burned to sticks; and for my own part, do what I liked, I could not bring myself to mind what piece of work I was employed on the evening before, till, far on the road, I recollected that it was a pair of mouse-brown spatter-dashes for worthy old Mr Mooleypouch the meal-monger.

Oh, it is a pleasant thing, now and then, to get a peep of the country! To them who live among shops and markets, and stone-walls, and butcher-stalls, and fishwives—and the smell of ready-made tripe, red herring, and Cheshire cheeses—the sights, and sounds, and smells of the country bring to mind the sinless days of the world before the fall of man, when all was love, peace, and happiness. Peter Farrel and I were transported out of our seven senses as we feasted our eyes on the beauty of the green fields. The bumblees were bizzing among the gowans and bluebells, and a thousand wee birds among the green trees were churm-churming away, filling earth and air with music, as it were a universal hymn of gratitude to the Creator for His unbounded goodness to all His creatures. We saw the trig country lasses bleaching their snow-white linen on the grass by the water-side, and they too were lilting their favourite songs,—Logan Water, the Flowers of the Forest, and the Broom of the Cowdenknowes. All the world seemed happy, and I could scarcely believe—what I kent to be true for all that—that we were still walking in the realms of sin and misery. The milk-cows were nipping the clovery parks, and chewing their cuds at their leisure,—the wild partridges whidding about in pairs, or birring their wings with fright over the hedges,—and the blue-bonneted ploughmen on the road cracking their whips in wantonness, and whistling along amid the clean straw in their carts. And then the rows of snug cottages, with their kailyards and their gooseberry bushes, with the fruit hanging from the branches like earrings on the neck of a lady of fashion. How happy, thought we both—both Peter Farrel and me—how happy might they

be who, without worldly pride or ambition, passed their days in such situations, in the society of their wives and children. Ah ! such were a blissful lot !

During our ride, Peter Farrel and I had an immense deal of rational conversation on a variety of matters, Peter having seen great part of the world in his youth, from having made two voyages to Greenland—during one of which he was very nearly frozen up—with his uncle, who was the mate of a whale-vessel. To relate all that Peter told me he had seen and witnessed in his far-away travels, among the white bears and the frozen seas, would take up a great deal of the reader's time, and of my paper ; but as to its being very diverting, there is no doubt of that. However, when Peter came to the years of discretion, Peter had sense enough in his noddle to discover that “a rowing stane gathers no fog ;” and having got an inkling of the penny-pie manufacture when he was a wee smout, he yoked to the baking trade tooth and nail, and in the course of years thumped butter-bakes with his elbows to some purpose ; so that, at the time of our col-leaguening together, Peter was well to do in the world—had bought his own bounds, and built new ones—could lay down the blunt for his article, and take the measure of the markets, by laying up wheat in his granaries against the day of trouble—to wit, rise of prices.

“Well, Peter,” said I to him, “seeing that ye read the newspapers, and have a notion of things, what think ye, just at the present moment, of affairs in general ?”

Peter cocked up his lugs at this appeal, and looking as wise as if he had been Solomon's nephew, gave a knowing smirk, and said—

“Is it foreign or domestic affairs that you are after, Maister Wauch ? for the question is a six-quarters wide one.”

I was determined not to be beat by man of woman born ; so I answered with almost as much cleverality as himself, “Oh, Mr Farrel, as to our foreign concerns, I trust I am ower loyal a subject of George the Third to have any doubt at all about them, as the Buonaparte is yet to be born that will ever beat our regulars abroad—to say nothing of our volunteers at home ; but what think you of the paper specie—the national debt—borough reform—the poor-rates—and the Catholic question ?”

I do not think Peter jealous of I ever had so much in my noddle ; but when he saw I had put him to his mettle, he did his best to give me satisfactory answers to my queries, saying, that till gold came in fashion, it would not be for my own interest, or that of my family, to refuse bank-notes, for which he would, any day of the year, give me as many quarter loaves as I could carry, to say nothing of coarse flour for the prentices' scones, and bran for the pigs : that the national debt would take care of itself long after both him and I were gathered to our fathers ; and that individual debt was a much more hazardous, pressing, and personal concern, far more likely to come home to our more immediate bosoms and businesses : that the best species of reform was every one's commencing to make amendment in their own lives and conversations : that poor-rates were likely to be worse before they were better : and that, as to the Catholic question,—“ But, Mansie,” said he, “ it would give me great pleasure to hear your candid and judicious opinion of Popery and the Papists.”

I saw, with half an e'e, that Peter was trying to put me to my mettle, and I devoutly wished that I had had James Batter at my elbow to have given him play for his money—James being the longest-headed man that ever drove a shuttle between warp and woof ; but most fortunately, just as I was going to say that “ every honest man, who wished well to the good of his country, could only have one opinion upon that subject,” we came to the by-road, that leads away off on the right-hand side down to Hawthornden, and we observed, from the curious ringle, that one of the naig's fore-shoon was loose ; which consequently put an end to the discussion of this important national question, before Peter and I had time to get it comfortably settled to the world's satisfaction.

The upshot was, that we were needcessitated to dismount, and lead the animal by the head forward to Kittlerig, where Macturk Sparrible keeps his smith's shop, in order that, with his hammer, he might make fast the loose nails ; and that him and his foresman did in a couple of hurries, me and Peter looking over them with our hands in our big-coat pockets, while they pelt-pelted away with the beast's foot

between their knees, as if we had been a couple of grand gentlemen incog. ; and so we were to him.

After getting ourselves again decently mounted, and giving Sparrible a consideration for his trouble, Peter took occasion, from the horse casting its shoe, to make a few apropos moral observations, in the manner of the Rev. Mr Wiggie, on the uncertainties which it is every man's lot to encounter in the weariful pilgrimage of human life. "There is many a slip 'tween the cup and the lip," said Peter.

"And indeed, Mr Farrel, ye never spoke a truer word," said I. "We are here to-day—yonder to-morrow ; this moment we are shining like the mid-day sun, and on the next, pugh ! we go out like the snuff of a candle. 'Man's life,' as Job observes, 'is like a weaver's shuttle.'"

"But, Maister Wauch," quo' Peter, who was a hearer of the Parish Church, "you dissenting bodies aye take the black side of things ; never considering that the doubtful shadows of affairs sometimes brighten up into the cloudless daylight. For instance, now, there was an old fellow-apprentice of my father's, who, like myself, was a baker—his name was Charlie Cheeper ; and, both his father and mother dying when he was yet hardly in trousers, he would have been left without a hame in the world, had not an old widow woman, who had long lived next door to them, and whose only bread-winner was her spinning-wheel, taken the wee wretchie in to share her morsel. For several years, as might naturally have been expected, the callant was a perfect dead-weight on the concern, and perhaps, in her hours of greater distress, the widow regretted the heedlessness of her Christian charity ; but Charlie had a winning way with him, and she could not find it in her heart to turn him to the door. By the time he was seven—and a ragged coute he was as ever stepped without shoes—he could fend for himself, by running messages—holding horses at shop-doors—winning bools and selling them—and so on ; so that, when he had collected half-a-crown in a penny pig, the widow sent him to the school, where he got on like a hatter, and in a little while could both read and write. When he was ten, he was bound apprentice to Saunder Snaps in the Back Row, whose grandson has yet, as you know, the sign of the Wheat Sheaf ; and for five years he behaved himself like his betters.

“Well, sir, when his time was out, Charlie had an ambition to see the world ; and, by working for a month or two as a journeyman in the Candlemaker Row at Edinburgh, he raked as much together as took him up to London in the steerage of a Leith smack. For several years nothing was heard of him, except an occasional present of a shawl, or so on, to the widow, who had been so kind to him in his helpless years ; and at length a farewell present of some little money came to her, with his blessing for past favours, saying that he was off for good and all to America.

“In the course of time, Widow Amos became frail and sand-blind. She was unable to work for herself, and the charity she had shown to others no one seemed disposed to extend to her. Her only child, Jeanie Amos, was obliged to leave her service, and come home to the house of poverty, to guard her mother’s grey hairs from accident, and to divide with her the little she could make at the trade of mangling : for with the money that Charlie Cheeper had sent, before leaving the country, the old woman had bought a calender, and let it out to the neighbours at so much an hour,—honest poverty having many shifts.

“Matters had gone on in this way for two or three fitful years ; and Jeanie, who, when she had come home from service, was a buxom and blooming lass, although yet but a wee advanced in her thirties, began to show, like all earthly things, that she was wearing past her best. Some said that she had lost hopes of Charlie’s return ; and others, that come hame when he liked, he would never look over his left shoulder after her.

“Well, sir, as fact as death, I mind mysell, when a laddie, of the rumpus the thing made in the town. One Saturday night, a whole washing of old Mrs Pernickity’s that had been sent to be calendered, vanished like lightning, no one knew where : the old lady was neither to hold nor bind, and nothing would serve her but having both the old woman and her daughter committed to the Tolbooth. So to the Tolbooth they went, weeping and wailing, followed by a crowd who cried loudly out at the sin and iniquity of the proceeding ; because the honesty of the prisoners, although impeached, was unimpeachable : the mob were furious ; and before the Sunday sun arose, old Mrs Pernickity awakened

with a sore throat, every pane of her windows having been miraculously broken during the dead hours.

"The mother and the daughter were kept in custody until the Monday ; when, as they were standing making a declaration of their innocence before the justices, who should come in but Francie Deep, the Sheriff-officer, with an Irish vagrant and his wife—two tinklers who were lodging in the Back Row, and in whose possession the bundle was found bodily, basket and all. Such a cheering as the folk set up ! it did all honest folk's hearts good to hear it. Mrs Pernickity and her lass, to save their bacon, were obliged to be let out by a back door ; and as the justices were about to discharge the two prisoners, who had been so unjustly and injuriously suspected, a stranger forced his way to the middle of the floor, and took the old woman in his arms !"

"Charlie Cheeper returned, for a gold guinea," said I.

"And no other it was," said Peter, resuming his comical story. "The world had flowed upon him to his heart's desire. Over in Virginia he had given up the baking business, and commenced planter ; and after years of industrious exertion, having made enough and to spare, he had returned to spend the rest of his days in peace and plenty in his native town."

"Not to interrupt you," added I, "Mr Farrel, I think I could wager something mair."

"You are a witch of a guesser, I know, Mansie," said Peter ; "and I see what you are at. Well, sir, you are right again. For, on the very day week that Patrick Makillaguddy and his spouse got their heads shaved, and were sent to beat hemp in the New Bridewell on the Calton Hill, Jeanie Amos became Mrs Cheeper ; the calender and the spinning-wheel were both burned by a crowd of wicked weans before old Mrs Pernickity's door, raising such a smoke as almost smeaked her to a rizzar'd haddock ; and the old widow, under the snug roof of her ever grateful son-in-law, spent the remainder of her Christian life in peace and prosperity."

"That story ends as it ought," said I, "Mr Farrel ; neither Jew nor Gentile dare dispute that ; and as to the telling of it, I do not think man of woman born, except maybe James Batter, who is a nonsuch, could have handled it more prettily. I like to hear virtue aye getting its ain reward."

As these dividual words were falling from my lips, we approached the end of our journey, the Roslin Inn house heaving in sight, at the door of which me and Peter louped out, an hostler with a yellow striped waistcoat, and white calico sleeves, meantime holding the naig's head, in case it should spend off, and capsize the concern. After seeing the horse and gig put into the stable, Peter and I pulled up our shirt necks, and after looking at our watches as if time was precious, oxtered away, arm in arm, to see the Chapel, which surpasses all, and beats cock-fighting.

It is an unaccountable thing to me how the auld folk could afford to build such grand kirks and castles. If once gold was like slate stones, there is a wearyful change nowadays, I must confess; for, so to speak, gold guineas seem to have taken flight from the land along with the witches and warlocks, and posterity are left as toom in the pockets as rookit gamblers.

But if the mammon of precious metals be now totally altogether out of the world, weel-a-wat we had a curiosity still, and that was a cleipy woman with a long stick, that rhaemed away, and better rhaemed away, about the Prentice's Pillar, who got a knock on the pow from his jealous black-guard of a master—and about the dogs and the deer—and Sir Thomas this-thing and my Lord t'other-thing, who lay buried beneath the broad flag-stones in their rusty coats of armour—and such a heap of havers, that no throat was wide enough to swallow them for gospel, although gey an' entertaining, I allow. However, it was a real farce, that is certain.

Oh, but the building was a grand and overpowering sight, making man to dree the sense of his own insignificance, even in the midst of his own handiwork! First, we looked over our shoulders to the grand carved roofs, where the swallows swee-swee'd, as they darted through the open windows, and the yattering sparrows fed their gorbals in the far boles; and syne we looked shuddering down into the dark vaults, where nobody in their senses could have ventured, though Peter Farrel, being a rash, courageous body, was keen on it, having heard less than I could tell him of such places being haunted by the spirits of those who have died or been murdered within them in the bloody days of the old times;

or of their being so full of foul air, as to extinguish man's breath in his nostrils like the snuff of a candle. Though no man should throw his life into jeopardy, yet I commend all for taking timeous recreation—the King himself on the throne not being able to live without the comforts of life; and even the fifteen Lords of Session, with as much powder on their wigs as would keep a small family in loaves for a week, requiring air and exercise, after sentencing vagabonds to be first hanged, and then their clothes given to Jock Heich, and their bodies to Doctor Monro.

Before going out to inspect the wonderfuls, we had taken the natural precaution to tell the goodman of the inn that we would be back to take a chack of something from him at such and such an hour, and having had our bellyful of the Chapel,—and the Prentice's Pillar,—and the vaults,—and the cleipy auld wife with the lang stick,—we found that we had still half an hour to spare, so took a stroll into the Kirkyard, to see if we could find out if any of the martyrs had been buried there-away-about.

We saw a good few headstones, you may make no doubt, both ancient and modern, but nothing out of the course of nature; so, the day being pleasant, Mr Farrel and me sat down on a throughstane below an old hawthorn, and commenced chatting on the Pentland Hills—the river Esk—Penicuik—Glencorse—and all the rest of the beautiful country within sight. A mooly auld skull was lying among the grass, and Peter, as he spoke, was aye stirring it about with his stick.

“I never touched a dead man's bonés in my life,” said I to Peter, “nor would I for a sixpence. Who might that have belonged to, now, I wonder? Maybe to a baker or a tailor, in his day and generation, like you and I, Peter; or maybe to ane of the great Sinclairs with their coats-of-mail, that the auld wife was cracking so crouselly about.”

“Deil may care,” said Peter; “but are you really frightened to touch a skull, Mansie? You would make a bad doctor, I'm doubting, then, to say nothing of a resurrection man.”

“Doctor! I would not be a doctor for all the gold and silver on the walls of Solomon's temple——”

“Yet you would think the young doctors suck in their trade with their mother's milk, and could cut off one an-

other's heads as fast as look at you.—Speaking of skulls," added Peter, "I mind when my father lived in the under-flat of the three-storey house at the top of Dalkeith Street, that the Misses Skinflints occupied the middle storey, and Doctor Chickenweed had the one above with the garrets, in which was the laboratory.

"Weel, ye observe, in getting to the shop it was not necessary to knock at the Doctor's door, but just proceed up the narrow wooden stair, facing the top of which was the shop-door, which, for light to the customer's feet, was generally allowed to stand open.

"For a long time the Doctor had heard the most unearthly noises in his house, as if a thunderbolt was in the habit of coming in at one of the skylights and walking down-stairs, and the Misses Skinflints had more than once nearly got their door carried off the hinges; so they had not the life of dogs for constant startings and surprises. At first they had no faith in ghosts; but, in the course of time, they came to be alike doubtful on that point;—but you shall hear.

"The foundation of the mystery was this. The three mischievous laddies—the apprentices—after getting their daily work over of making pills and potions for his Majesty's unfortunate subjects, took to the trick of mounting a human skull, like that, upon springs, so that it could open its mouth, and setting it on a stand at the end of the counter, could make it gape, and turn from side to side, by pulling a string.

"The door being left purposely ajee—whenever the rascals saw a fit subject, they set the skull a-moving and a-gaping; the consequence of which was, that many a poor customer descended without counting the number of steps, and after bouncing against Dr Chickenweed's panels, played flee down to try the strength of Misses Skinflints'. One of the three instantly darted down behind the vanished patient; and after assisting her or him—whichever it might chance to be—to gain their feet, begged of them not to mention what they had seen, as the house was haunted by the ghost of an old maiden aunt of their master's who had died abroad, and that the thing would hurt his feelings if ever it came to his ears."

"Dog on me," said I, "if ever I heard of such a trick since ever I was born! What was the upshot?"

“The upshot was, that the thing might have continued long enough, and the laboratory been left as deserted as Tadmor in the Wilderness, had not a fat old woman fallen one day perfectly through the doctor’s door and dislocated her ankle, which unfortunately incapacitated her from making a similar attack on that of the Misses Skinflints’. The consequence was that the conspiracy was detected—the Doctor’s aunt’s ghost laid—and the fat old woman carried down on a shutter to her bed, where she lay till her ankle grew better in the course of nature.”

It being near the hour at which we had ordered our dinner to be ready, we rose up from the tombstone, and after taking a snuff out of Peter’s box, we returned arm in arm to the tavern to lay in a stock of provisions.

Peter Farrel was a warm-hearted, thorough-going fellow, and did not like half-measures, such as swallowing the sheep and worrying on the tail; so, after having ate as many strawberries as we could well stow away, he began trying to fright me with stories of folk taking the elic passion—the colic—the mulligrubs—and other deadly maladies, on account of neglecting to swallow a drop of something warm to qualify the coldness of the fruit; so, after we had discussed good part of a fore-quarter of lamb and chopped cabbage—the latter a prime dish—we took first one jug, and syne another, till Peter was growing tongue-tied, and as red in the face as a bubbly-jock; and, to speak the truth, my own een began to reel with the merligoes. In a jiffy both of us found our hearts waxing so brave as to kick and spur at all niggardly hesitation, and we leuch and thumped on the goodman of the inn-house’s mahogany table as if it had been warranted never to break. In fact, we were as furious and obstrapulous as two unchristened Turks, and it was a mercy that we ever thought of rising to come away at all. At the long and the last, however, we found ourselves mounted and trotting home at no allowance, me telling Peter, as far as I mind, to give the beast a good creish, and not to be frightened.

The evening was fine, and warmer than we could have wished, our cheeks glowing like dragoon’s jackets, and as we passed like lightning through among the trees, the sun was setting with a golden glory in the west, between the Pent-

land and the Corstorphine Hills, and flashing in upon us through the branches at every opening. About half-way on our road back we foregathered with Robbie Maut, drucken body, with his Shetland rig-and-fur hose on, and his green umbrella in his hand, shug-shugging away home, keeping the trot, with his tale, and his bit arm shake-shaking at his tae side, on his grey sheltie ; so, after carhailing him, we bragged him to a race full gallop for better than a mile to the toll. The damage we did I dare not pretend to recollect. First, we knocked over two drunk Irishmen, that were singing "Erin-go-Bragh" arm in arm ; syne we rode over the top of an old woman with a wheelbarrow of cabbages ; and when we came to the toll, which was kept by a fat man with a red waistcoat, Robbie's pony, being, like all Highlanders, a wilful creature, stopped all at once ; and though he won the half-mutchkin by getting through first, after driving over the tollman, it was at the expense of poor Robbie's being ejected from his stirrups like a battering-ram, and disappearing head-foremost through the tollhouse window, which was open, hat, wig, green umbrella, and all—the tollman's wife's bairn making a providential escape, from Robbie landing on all-fours more than two yards on the far side of the cradle in which it was lying asleep, with its little flannel nightgown on.

At the time all was war and rebellion with the tollman—assault and battery, damages, broken panes, and what not ; but with skilful management, and a few words in the private ear of Mr Rory Sneckdrawer, the penny-writer, we got matters southered up when we were in our sober senses ; though I shall not say how much it cost us both in preaching and pocket to make the man keep a calm sough as to bringing us in for the penalty, which would have been deadly. I think black-burning shame of myself to make mention of such ploys and pliskies—but after all it is better to make a clean breast.

Hame at last we got, making fire flee out of the Dalkeith causey stones like mad ; and we arrived at our own door between nine and ten at night, still in a half-seas-overish state. I had nevertheless sense enough about me remaining to make me aware that the best place for me would be my bed ; so, after making Nanse bring the bottle and glass to

the door on a server to give Peter Farrel a dram by way of "doch-an-dorris," as the Gaelic folk say, we wished him a good-night, and left him to drive home the bit gig, with the broken shaft spliced with ropes, to his own bounds—little jealousy, as we heard next morning, that he would be thrown over the back of it without being hurt, by taking too sharp a turn at the corner.

After a tremendous sound sleep, I was up betimes in the morning, though a wee drumly about the head, anxious to inquire at Tammie Bodkin, the head of the business department, me being absent, if any extraordinars had occurred on the yesterday; and found that the only particular customer making inquiries anent me was our old friend Cursecowl, savage for the measure of a killing-coat, which he wanted made as fast as directly. Though dreadfully angry at finding me from home, and uncoswithering at first, he at length, after a volley of oaths enough to have opened a stone wall, allowed Tammie Bodkin to take his inches; but as he swore and went on havoring and speaking nonsense all the time, Tammie's hand shook, partly through fear and partly through anxiety; and if he went wrong in making a nick in the paper here and there in a wrong place, it was no more than might have been looked for from his fright and inexperience.

In the twinkle of an eyelid I saw that there was some mortal mistake in the measurement; as, unless Cursecowl had lost beef at no allowance, I knew, judging from the past, that it would not peep on his corpus by four inches. The matter was, however, now past all earthly remede, and there was nothing to be done but trusting to good fortune, and allowing the killing-coat to take its chance in the world. How the thing happened I have bothered and beat my brains to no purpose to make out, and it remains a wonderful mystery to me to this blessed day; but by long thought on the subject, both when awake and in my bed, and by multifarious cross-questionings at Tammie's self concerning the paper measurings, I am devoutly inclined to think that he mistook the nicking of the side-seams and the shoulder-strap for the girth of the belly-band.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CATCHING A TARTAR.

Fr. Sol. O, prenez miséricorde ! ayez pitié de moy !

Pist. Moy shall not serve, I will have forty moys ;
For I will fetch thy rim out at thy throat,
In drops of crimson blood."—*Henry V.*

From the first moment I clapped eye on the caricature thing of a coat that Tammie Bodkin had in my absence shaped out for Cursecowl the butcher, I foresaw in my own mind that a catastrophe was brewing for us, and never did soldier gird himself to fight the French, or sailor prepare for a sea-storm, with greater alacrity than I did to cope with the bull-dog anger, and buffet back the uproarious vengeance of our heathenish customer.

At first I thought of letting the thing take its natural course, and of threaping down Cursecowl's throat that he must have been feloniously keeping in his breath when Tammie took his measure—and, moreover, that as it was the fashion to be strait-laced, Tammie had done his utmost trying to make him look like his betters—till, my conscience checking me for such a nefarious intention, I endeavoured, as became me in the relations of man, merchant, and Christian, to solder the matter peaceably, and show him, if there was a fault committed, that there was no evil intention on my side of the house. To this end I despatched the bit servant wench on the Friday afternoon to deliver the coat, which was neatly tied up in brown paper, and directed, "Mr Cursecowl, with care," and to buy a sheep's head—bidding her, by way of being civil, give my kind compliments, and inquire how Mr and Mrs Cursecowl, and the five little Miss Cursecowls, were keeping their healths, and trusting to his honour in sending me a good article. But have a moment's patience.

Being busy at the time turning a pair of kuttikins for old Mr Mooleypouch the mealmonger when the lassie came back, I had no mind of asking a sight of the sheep's head, as I aye like the little blackfaced in preference to the white, fat, fozy Cheviot breed ; but, most providentially, I caught

a gliskie of the wench passing the shop window on the road over to Jamie Coom the smith's, to get it singed, having been despatched there by her mistress. Running round the counter like lightning, I opened the sneck and halooed to her to wheel to the right-about, having, somehow or other, a superstitious longing to look at the article. As I was saying, there was a Providence in this, which, at the time, mortal man could never have thought of.

James Batter had popped in with a newspaper in his hand to read me a curious account of a mermaid that was seen singing a Gaelic song and combing its hair with a tortoise-shell comb, someway terrible far north about Shetland, by a respectable minister of the district, riding home in the gloaming after a presbytery dinner. So, as he was just taking off his spectacles cannily, and saying to me, "And was not that droll?" the lassie spread down her towel on the counter, when, lo and behold, such an abominable spectacle! James Batter observing me run back and turn white, put on his glasses again, cannily taking them out of his well-worn shagreen case, and giving a stare down at the towel, almost touched the beast's nose with his own.

"And what, in the name of goodness, is the matter?" quo' James Batter; "ye seem in a wonderful quandary."

"The matter!" answered I, in astonishment, looking to see if the man had lost his sight or his senses,—“the matter! whoever saw a sheep's head with straight horns, and a visiony all colours of the rainbow—red, blue, orange, green, yellow, white, and black?”

"'Deed it is," said James, after a nearer inspection; "it must be a lowsy-naturay. I'm sure I have read most of Buffon's books, and I have never heard tell of the like. It's gey an' queerish."

"'Od, James," answered I, "ye take everything very canny; you're a philosopher, to be sure, but I daresay if the moon was to fall from the lift and knock down the old kirk, ye would say no more than 'it's gey an' queerish!'"

"Queerish, man! do ye not see that?" added I, shoving down his head mostly on the top of it. "Do ye not see that? awful, most awful! extonishing!! Do ye not see that long beard? Who, in the name of goodness, ever was an eye-witness to a sheep's head, in a Christian land, with a beard

like an unshaven Jew crying 'owl clowes,' with a green bag over his left shoulder !”

“Dog on it,” said James, giving a fidge with his hainches ; “dog on it, as I am a living sinner, that is the head of a Willie-goat.”

“Willie or Nannie,” answered I, “it’s not meat for me ; and never shall an ounce of it cross the craig of my family, —that is as sure as ever James Batter drave a shuttle. Give counsel in need, James : what is to be done ?”

“That needs consideration,” quo’ James, giving a bit hoast. “Unless he makes ample apology, and explains the mistake in a feasible way, it is my humble opinion that he ought to be summoned before his betters. That is the legal way to make him smart for his sins.”

At last a thought struck me, and I saw farther through my difficulties than ever mortal man did through a millstone ; but, like a politician, I minted not the matter to James. Keeping my tongue cannily within my teeth, I then laid the head, wrapped up in the bit towel, in a corner behind the counter ; and turning my face round again to James, I put my hands into my breeches-pockets, as if nothing in the world had happened, and ventured back to the story of the mermaid. I asked him how she looked—what kind of dress she wore—if she swam with her corsets—what was the colour of her hair—where she would buy the tortoise-shell comb—and so on ; when, just as he was clearing his pipe to reply, who should burst open the shop-door like a clap of thunder, with burning cat’s een, and a face as red as a soldier’s jacket, but Cursecowl himself, with the new killing-coat in his hand—which, giving a tremendous curse, the words of which are not essentially necessary for me to repeat, being an elder of our kirk, he made play flee at me with such a birr, that it twisted round my neck, and, mostly blinding me, made me doze like a tottum. At the same time, to clear his way, and the better to enable him to take a good mark, he gave James Batter a shove that made him stoiter against the wall, and snacked the good new farthing tobacco-pipe that James was taking his first whiff out of ; crying, at the same blessed moment—“Hold out o’ my road, ye long withered wabster. Ye’re a pair of hawering idiots ; but I’ll have pennyworths out of both your skins, as I’m a sinner !”

What was to be done? There was no time for speaking, for Cursecowl, foaming like a mad dog with passion, seized hold of the ell-wand, which he flourished round his head like a Highlander's broadsword, and stamping about, with his stockings drawn up his thighs, threatened every moment to commit bloody murder.

If James Batter never saw service before, he learned a little of it that day, being in a pickle of bodily terror not to be imagined by living man; but his presence of mind did not forsake him, and he cowered for safety and succour into a far corner, holding out a web of buckram before him—me crying all the time, "Send for the town-officer! will ye not send for the town-officer?"

You may talk of your General Moores and your Lord Wellingtons as ye like; but never, since I was born, did I ever see or hear tell of anything braver than the way Tammie Bodkin behaved, in saving both our precious lives, at that blessed nick of time, from touch-and-go jeopardy: for, when Cursecowl was rampaung about, cursing and swearing like a Russian bear, hurling out volleys of oaths that would have frightened John Knox, forbye the like of us, Tammie stole in behind him like a wild-cat, followed by Joseph Breekey, Walter Cuff, and Jack Thorl, the three apprentices, on their stocking-soles; and, having strong and dumpy arms, pinned back his elbows like a flash of lightning, giving the other callants time to jump on his back, and hold him like a vice; while, having got time to draw my breath and screw up my pluck, I ran forward like a lion, and houghed the whole concern—Tammie Bodkin, the three faithful apprentices, Cursecowl and all, coming to the ground like a battered castle.

It was now James Batter's time to come up in line; and though a douce man (being savage for the insulting way that Cursecowl had dared to use him), he dropped down like mad, with his knees on Cursecowl's breast—who was yelling, roaring, and grinding his buck-teeth like a mad bull, kicking right and spurring left with fire and fury—and, taking his Kilmarnock off his head, thrust it, like a battering-ram, into Cursecowl's mouth, to hinder him from alarming the neighbourhood, and bringing the whole world about our ears. Such a stramash of tumbling, roaring,



George Cruikshank

Curse-cowl & the Apprentices.



tearing, swearing, kicking, pushing, cuffing, rugging and riving about the floor!! I thought they would not have left one another with a shirt on : it seemed a combat even to the death. Cursecowl's breath was choked up within him like wind in an empty bladder, and when I got a gliskie of his face, from beneath James's cowl, it was growing as black as the crown of my hat. It feared me much that murder would be the upshot, the webs being all heeled over, both of broad-cloth, buckram, cassimir, and Welsh flannel ; and the paper shapings and worsted runds coiled about their throats and bodies like fiery serpents. At long and last, I thought it became me, being the head of the house, to sound a parley, and bid them give the savage a mouthful of fresh air, to see if he had anything to say in his defence.

Cursecowl, by this time, had forcible assurance of our ability to overpower him, and finding he had by far the worst of it, was obliged to grow tamer, using the first breath he got to cry out, "A barley, ye thieves ! a barley ! I tell ye, give me wind. There's not a man in nine of ye !"

Finding our own strength, we saw, by this time, that we were masters of the field ; nevertheless, we took care to make good terms when they were in our power ; nor would we allow Cursecowl to sit upright, till after he had said, three times over, on his honour as a gentleman, that he would behave as became one.

After giving his breeches-knees a skuff with his loof, to dad off the stoure, he came, right foot foremost, to the counter side, while the laddies were dighting their brows, and stowing away the webs upon their ends round about, saying, "Maister Wauch, how have ye the conscience to send hame such a piece o' wark as that coat to ony decent man ? Do ye dare to imagine that I am a Jerusalem spider, that I could be crammed, neck and heels, into such a thing as that ? Fye, shame—it would not button on yourself, man, scarecrow-looking mortal though ye be !"

James Batter's blood was now up, and boiling like an old Roman's ; so he was determined to show Cursecowl that I had a friend in court, able and willing to keep him at stave's-end. "Keep a calm sough," said James Batter, interfering, "and not miscall the head of the house in his own shop ; or,

to say nothing of present consequences, by way of showing ye the road to the door, perhaps Maister Sneckdrawer, the penny-writer, 'll give ye a caption paper with a broad margin, to claw your elbow with at your leisure, my good fellow."

"Pugh, pugh," cried Cursecowl, snapping his finger and thumb at James's beak, "I do not value your threatening an ill halfpenny. Come away out your ways to the crown of the causey, and I'll box any three of ye, over the bannys, for half-a-mutchkin. But 'odsake, Batter, my man, nobody's speaking to you," added Cursecowl, giving a hack now and then, and a bit spit down on the floor; "go hame, man, and get your cowl washed; I dare say you have pushioned me, so I have no more to say to the like of you. But now, Maister Wauch, just speaking hooly and fairly, do you not think black burning shame of yourself, for putting such an article into any decent Christian man's hand, like mine?"

"Wait a wee—wait a wee, friend, and I'll give ye a lock salt to your broth," answered I, in a calm and cool way; for, being a confidential elder of Maister Wiggie's, I kept myself free from the sin of getting into a passion, or fighting, except in self-defence, which is forbidden neither by law nor gospel; and stooping down, I took up the towel from the corner, and spreading it upon the counter, bade him look, and see if he knew an auld acquaintance!

Cursecowl, to be such a dragoon, had some rational points in his character; so, seeing that he lent ear to me with a smirk on his rough red face, I went on: "Take my advice as a friend, and make the best of your way home, killing-coat and all; for the most perfect will sometimes fall into an innocent mistake, and, at any rate, it cannot be helped now. But if ye show any symptom of obstrapulosity, I'll find myself under the necessity of publishing you abroad to the world for what you are, and show about that head in the towel for a wonder to broad Scotland, in a manner that will make customers flee from your booth, as if it was infected with the seven plagues of Egypt."

At sight of the goat's-head, Cursecowl clapped his hand on his thigh two or three times, and could scarcely muster good manners enough to keep himself from bursting out a-laughing.

"Ye seem to have found a fiddle, friend," said I; "but give me leave to tell you, that ye'll maybe find it liker a hanging-match than a musical matter. Are you not aware that I could hand you over to the sheriff, on two special indictments? In the first place, for an action of assault and batterification, in cuffing me, an elder of our kirk, with a sticked killing-coat, in my own shop; and, in the second place, as a swindler, imposing on his Majesty's loyal subjects, taking the coin of the realm on false pretences, and palming off goat's flesh upon Christians, as if they were perfect Pagans."

Heathen though Cursecowl was, this oration alarmed him in a jiffie, soon showing him, in a couple of hurries, that it was necessary for him to be our humble servant: so he said, still keeping the smirk on his face, "Keh, keh, it's not worth making a noise about after all. Gie me the jacket, Mansie my man, and it'll maybe serve my nephew, young Killim, who is as lingit in the waist as a wasp. Let us take a shake of your paw over the counter, and be friends. Bye-ganes should be bye-ganes."

Never let it be said that Mansie Wauch, though one of the king's volunteers, ever thrust aside the olive branch of peace; so, ill-used though I had been, to say nothing of James Batter, who had got his pipe smashed to crunches, and one of the eyes of his spectacles knocked out, I gave him my fist frankly.

James Batter's birse had been so fiercely put up, and no wonder, that it was not so easily sleeked down; so, for a while, he looked unco glum, till Cursecowl insisted that our meeting should not be a dry one; nor would he hear a single word on me and James Batter not accepting his treat of a mutchkin of Kilbagie.

I did not think James would have been so doure and refractory—funking and flinging like old Jeroboam; but at last, with the persuasion of the treat, he came to, and, sleeking down his front hair, we all three took a step down to the far end of the close, at the back street, where Widow Thomson kept the sign of "The Tankard and the Tappit Hen;" Cursecowl, when we got ourselves seated, ordering in the spirits with a loud rap on the table with his knuckles, and a whistle on the landlady through his fore-teeth, that made the roof ring. A bottle of beer was also brought; so, after

drinking one another's healths round, with a tasting out of the dram glass, Cursecowl swashed the rest of the raw creature into the tankard, saying,—“Now take your will o't; there's drink fit for a king; that's real ‘Pap-in.’”

He was an awful body, Cursecowl, and had a power of queer stories, which, weel-a-wat, did not lose in the telling. James Batter, beginning to brighten up, hoded and leuch like a nine-year-old; and I freely confess, for another, that I was so diverted, that, I dare say, had it not been for his fearsome oaths, which made our very hair stand on end, and were enough to open the stone-wall, we would have both sate from that time to this.

We got the whole story of the Willie-goat, out and out; it seeming to be, with Cursecowl, a prime matter of diversion, especially that part of it relating to the head, by which he had won a crown-piece from Deacon Paunch, who wagered that the wife and me would eat it, without ever finding out our mistake. But, aha, lad!

The long and the short of the matter was this. The Willie-goat had, for eighteen year, belonged to a dragoon marching regiment, and, in its better days, had seen a power of service abroad; till, being now old and infirm, it had fallen off one of the baggage-carts, and got its leg broken on the road to Piershill, where it was sold to Cursecowl, by a corporal, for half-a-crown and a dram. The four quarters he had managed to sell for mutton, like lightning—this one buying a jigget, that one a back-ribs, and so on. However, he had to weather a gey brisk gale in making his point good. One woman remarked, that it had an unearthly, rank smell; to which he said, “No, no—ye do not ken your blessings, friend,—that's the smell of venison, for the beast was brought up along with the deers in the Duke's parks.” And to another wife, that, after smell-smelling at it, thought it was a wee humphed, he replied, “Faith, that's all the thanks folk gets for letting their sheep crop heather among the Cheviot Hills;” and such like lies. But as for the head, that had been the doure business. Six times had it been sold and away, and six times had it been brought back again. One bairn said, that her “mother didna like a sheep's head with horns like these, and wanted it changed for another one.” A second one said, that “it had tup's een, and her father

liked wether mutton." A third customer found mortal fault with the colours, which, she said, were not canny, or in the course of nature." What the fourth one said, and the fifth one took leave to observe, I have stupidly forgotten, though, I am sure, I heard both; but I mind one remarked, quite off-hand, as she sought back her money, that "unless sheep could do without beards, like their neighbours, she would keep the pot boiling with a piece beef, in the mean time." After all this, would any mortal man believe it, Deacon Paunch, the greasy Daniel Lambert that he is, had taken the wager, as I before took opportunity to remark, that our family would swallow the bait? But, aha, he was off his eggs there!

James and me were so tickled with Cursecowl's wild, outrageous, off-hand, humoursome way of telling his crack, that, though sore with neighering, none of the two of us ever thought of rising; Cursecowl chapping in first one stoup, and then another, and birling the tankard round the table, as if we had been drinking dub-water. I dare say I would never have got away, had I not slipped out, behind Lucky Thomson's back—for she was a broad fat body, with a round-eared mutch, and a full-plaited check apron—when she was drawing the sixth bottle of small beer, with her corkscrew between her knees; Cursecowl lecturing away, at the dividual moment, like a Glasgow professor, to James Batter, whose een were gathering straws, on a pliskie he had once, in the course of trade, played on a conceited body of a French sicknurse, by selling her a lump of fat pork to make beef-tea of to her mistress, who was dwining in the blue Beelzebubs.

Ohone, and woes me, for old Father Adam and the fall of man! Poor, sober, good, honest James Batter was not, by a thousand miles, a match for such company. Every thing, however, has its moral, and the truth will out. When Nanse and me were sitting at our breakfast next morning, we heard from Benjie, who had been early up fishing for eels at the water-side, that the whole town-talk was concerning the misfortunate James Batter, who had been carried home, totally incapable, far in the night, by Cursecowl and an Irish labourer—that slept in Widow Thomson's garret—on a hand-barrow, borrowed from Maister Wiggie's servant-lass, Jenny Jessamine.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JAMES BATTER AND THE MAID OF DAMASCUS.

“ He chose a mournful muse
Soft pity to infuse ;
He sung the Weaver wise and good,
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood.”—*DRYDEN Revised.*

On the morning after the debosh with Mr Cursecowl, my respected friend, James Batter, the pattern of steadiness and sobriety, awoke in a terrible pliskie. The decent man came to the use of his senses as from a trance, and scarcely knew either where he was, or whether his head or heels were uppermost. He found himself lying without his Kilmar-nock, from which he might have received deadly damage, being subject to the rheumatics in the cuff of the neck ; and everything about him was in a most fearful and dis-jaskit state. It was a long time before he could, for the life of him, bring his mind or memory to a sense of his condition, having still on his corduroy trousers, and his upper and under vest, besides one of his stockings :—his hat, his wig, his neckcloth, his shoes, his coat, his snuff-box, his spectacles, and the other stocking, all lying on the floor, together with a table, a chair, a candlestick, with a broken candle, which had been knocked over ;—the snuffers standing upright, being sharp in the point, and having stuck in the deal floor.

It was a terrible business ! and might have been a life-long lesson to every one, of the truth of St Paul's maxim, that “evil communication corrupts good manners ;”—Cursecowl being the most incomprehensible fellow that ever breathed the breath of life. To add to his calamities, James found, on attempting to rise, that he had, in some way or other, of which he had not a shadow of recollection, dismally sprained his left ankle, which, to his consternation, was swelled like a door-post, and as blue as his apron. There was also a black ugly lump on his brow, as big as a

pigeon's egg, which was horrible to look at in the bit glass. Many a gallant soldier escaped from Waterloo with less scaith—and that they did. Poor innocent sowl! I pitied him from the very bottom of my heart—as who would not?

Having got an inkling of the town-talk by breakfast-time, and knowing also that many a one—such is the corruption of human nature—would like to have a hair in the neck of James, by taking up an evil report, I remembered within myself that a friend in need is a friend indeed, and cannily papped up the close, after I had got myself shaved, to see how the land lay. And a humbling spectacle it was! James could scarcely yet be said to be himself, for his eyes were like scored collops, and his stomach was so sick that his face was like ill-bleached linen—pale as a dishclout. When he tried to speak, it was between a bock and a hiccup with him, and my feeling for his situation was such—knowing, as I did, all the ins and outs of the business—that I could not help being very wae for him. It therefore behoved me to make Nanse send him a cup of well-made tea, to see if it would act as a settler, but his heart stood at it, as if it had been 'cacuana, and do as he liked, he could not let a drop of it down his craig. When the wife informed me of this, I at last luckily remembered the old saying about giving one a hair of the dog that bit him; and I made poor James swallow a thimbleful of malt spirits—the real unadulterated creatur—with wonderfully good effects. Though then in his sixty-first year, James declares on his honour as a gentleman, that this was the first time he ever had fallen a victim to the barley-fever!

How could we do otherwise! it afforded Nanse and I great pleasure—and no mistake—in acting the part of good Samaritans, by pouring oil and wine into his wounds; I having bound up his brow with a Sunday silk-napkin, and she having fomented his unfortunate ankle with warm water and hog's lard. The truth is, that I found myself in conscience bound and obligated to take a deep interest in the decent man's distresses, he having come to his catastrophe in a cause of mine, and having fallen a victim to the snares and devices of Cursecowl, instead of myself, for whom the vagabond's girn was set. Providence decided that, in

this particular case, I should escape ; but a better man, James Batter, was caught in it by the left ankle. What will a body say there ?

The web of Lucky Caird, which James had promised to carry home to her on the Saturday night, was still in the loom, and had I been up to the craft, I would not have hesitated to have driven the shuttle myself till I had got it off hand for him ; but every man to his trade ; so, afraid of consequences, I let the batter and the bobbin-box lie still, trusting to Lucky Caird's discretion, and my friend's speedy recovery. But the distress of James Batter was not the business of a day. In the course of the next night, to be sure, he had some natural sleep, which cleared his brain from the effects of that dangerous and deluding drink, the "Pap-in ;" but his ankle left him a grievous lameter, hirpling on a staff ; and, although his brown scratch and his Kilmarnock helped to hide the bump upon his temple, the dregs of it fell down upon his e'e-bree, which, to the consternation of everybody, became as green as a docken leaf.

My friend, however, be it added to this, was not more a sufferer in body than in estate ; for the illness, being of his own bringing on, he could not make application to the Weavers' Society—of which he had been a regular member for forty odd years—for his lawful sick-money. But, being a philosopher, James submitted to his bed of thorns without a murmur ; Nanse and I soothing his calamities, as we best could, by a bowl of sheep-head broth ; a rizzar'd haddock ; a tankard of broo-and-bread ; a caller egg ; a swine's trotter ; and other circumstantialities needless to repeat—as occasion required.

As for Cursecowl, the invincible reprobate, so ashamed was he of his infamous conduct, that he did not dare, for the life in his body, to show himself before my shop-window—far less in my presence—for more than a week ; yet, would ye believe it ! he made a perfect farce of the whole business among his own wauf cronies ; and, instead of repentance, I verily believe, would not have cared twopence to have played me the same pliskie that he did my douce and worthy friend. But away with him ! he is not worth speaking about ; and ye'll get nothing from a sow but—grumph !

Being betimes on the mending order, James sent down, one forenoon, to request, with his compliments, that I would hand him up by the bearer old Taffy with the Pigtail's bundle of papers,—as having more leisure in his hands than either he liked, or well knew how to dispose of, it might afford him some diversion to take a reading of them, for the purpose of inquiring farther into the particulars of the Welsh gentleman's history—which undoubtedly was a wee mysterious, consisting of matters lying heads and thraws, and of odds and ends that no human skill could dovetail into a Christian consistency.

On the night of the next day—I mind it weel, for it was on that dividual evening that Willie, the minister's man, married Mysie Clouts, the keeper of the lodging-house called the Beggars' Opera—it struck me, seeing the general joy of the weans on the street, and the laughing, daffing, and hullabaloo that they were making, that poor James must be lonely at his ingle side, and that a drink of porter and a crack would do his old heart good. Accordingly, I made Nanse send the bit lassie, our servant, Jenny Heggins, for a couple of bottles of Deacon Jaffrey's best brown stout, asking if he could pawn his word anent its being genuine, as it was for a gentleman in delicate health. So, brushing the sawdust off the doup of one of them, and slipping it into my coat pocket, which was gey an' large, I popped at leisure up the close to pay my neighbour a friendly visit.

'Od, but comfort is a grand thing. If ever ye saw an ancient patriarch, there was one. James was seated in his snug old easy-chair by the fireside, as if he had been an Edinburgh Parliament House lawyer, studying his hornings, duplies, and fugie warrants, with his left leg paraded out on a stool, with a pillow smoothed down over it, and all the Welshman's papers docketed on the bit table before him. The cat was lying streaked out on the hearth, pur-purring away to herself, and the kettle by the fire cheek was singing along with her, as if to cheer the heart of their mutual master. As for Mr Batter, he looked as preinct as a pike-staff, and so taken up was he with his papers, that, when I asked him how he felt, his answer, to my wonderment, was, that "in the Song of Songs, Solomon had likened the nose of his beloved to the tower of Lebanon, which looketh

towards Damascus." So brown was he in his studies, that, for a while, I feared the fall had produced some crack in his pan, and that his seven senses had gone a wool-gathering; but the story will out, as ye will hear, and being naturally a wee-camstairie, I gave him time to gather the feet of his faculties before pressing him too hard; but even the sight of the bottle of porter, toasting by the cheek of the fire, hardly brought him at once to his right mind.

Mr Batter's noddle, however, after a little patience, clearing up, we leisurely discussed between us the porter, which was in prime condition, with a ream as yellow as a marigold; together with half a dozen of butter-bakes, crimp and new-baked, it being batch-day with Thomas Burlings, who, like his father and grandfather before him, have been notorious in the biscuit department. It soon became clear to me, that the dialogue about Lebanon and Damascus, which was followed up with a clishmaclaver anent dirks, daggers, red cloaks, and other bloody weapons which made all my flesh grue, had some connection with Taffy's papers on the table—out of which James had been diverting himself by reading bits here and there, at random like.

In the course of our confab, he told me a monstrous heap about them; but, in general, the things were so out of the course of Providence, and so queer and leeing-like, that I, for one, would not believe them without solemn affidavy. Indeed, I began at length to question within myself—for the subject naturally resolved itself into two heads—firstly, whether Taffy's master might not have had a bee in his bonnet; or, secondly, whether he was a person not over-scrupulous regarding the matter of truth. As for James, he declared him a nonsuch, and said, that although poor, he would not have hesitated to have given him sixpence for a lock of his hair, just to keep beside him for a keepsake—(did any body ever hear such nonsense?) Before parting, he insisted that I should bear with him, till he read me over the story he had just finished as I came in, and which had been running in his noddle. At such a late hour, for it was now wearing on to wellnigh ten o'clock, I was not just clear about listening to anything bloody; but not to vex the old boy, who, I am sure, would not have slept a wink through the night for disappointment, had he not got a free breast made

of it, I at long and last consented—provided his story was not too long. My chief particularity on this point, as I should mention, was, that it was past Benjie's bedtime, and the callant had a hoast, which required all his mother's as well as my own good doctoring—having cost us two bottles of Dantzic black beer, with little effect; besides not a few other recommendations of friends and skielly acquaintances.

It was best, therefore, to consent with a good grace; so, after clearing his windpipes, James wiped the eyes of his spectacles with the corner of his red-check pocket-napkin; and thereafter fixing them on his beak, he commenced preaching away in grand style at some queer outlandish stuff, which fairly baffled my gumption. I must confess, however, both in fairness to Taffy and to James, that, as I had been up since five in the morning (having pawned my word to send home Duncan Imrie, the heel-cutter's new duffle great-coat by breakfast-time, as he had to go into the Edinburgh leather-market by eleven), my een were gathering straws; and it was only at the fearsome parts that I could for half a moment keep them sundry. "Many men," however, "many minds," as the copy-line book says; and as every one has a right to judge for himself, I requested James to copy the concern out for me; and ye here have it, word for word, without subtraction, multiplication, or addition.

THE MAID OF DAMASCUS.

"All close they met, all eves, before the dusk
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
 Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,
 Unknown of any, free from whispering tale."—KEATS.

In the reign of the Greek Emperor Heraclius, when the beautiful city of Damascus was at the height of its splendour and magnificence, dwelt therein a young noble, named Demetrius, whose decayed fortunes did not correspond with the general prosperity of the times. He was a youth of ardent disposition, and very handsome in person: pride kept him from bettering his estate by the profession of merchandise, yet more keenly did he feel the obscurity to which

adverse fates had reduced him, that in his lot was involved the fortune of one dearer than himself.

It so happened that, in that quarter of the city which faces the row of palm-trees, within the gate Keisan, dwelt a wealthy old merchant, who had a beautiful daughter. Demetrius had by chance seen her some time before, and he was so struck with her loveliness, that, after pining for many months in secret, he ventured on a disclosure, and, to his delighted surprise, found that Isabelle had long silently nursed a deep and almost hopeless passion for him also ; so, being now aware that their love was mutual, they were as happy as the bird that, all day long, sings in the sunshine from the summits of the cypress-trees.

True is the adage of the poet, that "the course of true love never did run smooth ;" and, in the father of the maiden, they found that a stumbling-block lay in the path of their happiness, for he was of an avaricious disposition, and they knew that he valued gold more than nobility of blood. Their fears grew more and more, as Isabelle, in her private conversations, endeavoured to sound her father on this point ; and although the suspicions of affection are often more apparent than real, in this they were not mistaken ; for, without consulting his child—and as if her soul had been in his hand—he promised her in marriage to a rich old miser, ay, twice as rich, and nearly as old as himself.

Isabelle knew not what to do ; for, on being informed by her father of the fate he had destined for her, her heart forsook her, and her spirit was bowed to the dust. Nowhere could she rest, like the Thracian bird that knoweth not to fold its wings in slumber—a cloud had fallen for her over the fair face of nature—and, instead of retiring to her couch, she wandered about weeping under the midnight stars, on the terrace on the housetop—wailing over her hapless fate, and calling on death to come and take her from her sorrows.

At morning she went forth alone into the garden ; but neither could the golden glow of the orange-trees, nor the perfumes of the rosiers, nor the delicate fragrance of the clustering henna and jasmine, delight her ; so she wearied for the hour of noon, having privately sent to Demetrius, inviting him to meet her by the fountain of the pillars at that time.

Poor Demetrius had, for some time, observed a settled sorrow in the conduct and countenance of his beautiful Isabelle—he felt that some melancholy revelation was to be made to him; and, all eagerness, he came at the appointed hour. He passed along the winding walks, unheeding of the tulips streaked like the ruddy evening clouds—of the flower betrothed to the nightingale—of the geranium blazing in scarlet beauty,—till, on approaching the place of promise, he caught a glance of the maid he loved—and, lo! she sate there in the sunlight, absorbed in thought; a book was on her knee, and at her feet lay the harp whose chords had been for his ear so often modulated to harmony.

He laid his hand gently on her shoulder, as he seated himself beside her on the steps; and seeing her sorrowful, he comforted her, and bade her be of good cheer, saying, that Heaven would soon smile propitiously on their fortunes, and that their present trials would but endear them the more to each other in the days of after years. At length, with tears and sobs, she told him of what she had learned; and, while they wept on each other's bosoms, they vowed over the Bible, which Isabelle held in her hand, to be faithful to each other to their dying day.

Meantime the miser was making preparations for the marriage ceremony, and the father of Isabelle had portioned out his daughter's dowry; when the lovers, finding themselves driven to extremity, took the resolution of escaping together from the city.

Now, it so happened, in accordance with the proverb, which saith that evils never come single, that, at this very time, the city of Damascus was closely invested by a mighty army, commanded by the Caliph Abubeker Alwakidi, the immediate successor of Mahomet; and, in leaving the walls, the lovers were in imminent hazard of falling into their cruel hands; yet, having no other resource left, they resolved to put their perilous adventure to the risk.

'Twas the Mussulman hour of prayer Magrib: the sun had just disappeared, and the purple haze of twilight rested on the hills, darkening all the cedar forests, when the porter of the gate Keisan, having been bribed with a largess, its folding leaves slowly opened, and forthwith issued a horseman closely wrapt up in a mantle; and behind him, at a

little space, followed another similarly clad. Alas ! for the unlucky fugitives, it so chanced that Derar, the captain of the night-guard, was at that moment making his rounds, and observing what was going on, he detached a party to throw themselves between the strangers and the town. The foremost rider, however, discovered their intention, and he called back to his follower to return. Isabelle—for it was she—instantly regained the gate, which had not yet closed, but Demetrius fell into the hands of the enemy.

As wont in those bloody wars, the poor prisoner was immediately carried by an escort into the presence of the Caliph, who put the alternative in his power of either, on the instant, renouncing his religion, or submitting to the axe of the headsman. Demetrius told his tale with a noble simplicity ; and his youth, his open countenance, and stately bearing, so far gained on the heart of Abubeker, that, on his refusal to embrace Mahomedism, he begged of him seriously to consider of his situation, and ordered a delay of the sentence, which he must otherwise pronounce, until the morrow.

Heart-broken and miserable, Demetrius was loaded with chains, and carried to a gloomy place of confinement. In the solitude of the night-hours he cursed the hour of his birth—bemoaned his miserable situation—and feeling that all his schemes of happiness were thwarted, almost rejoiced that he had only a few hours to live.

The heavy hours lagged on towards daybreak, and, quite exhausted by the intense agony of his feelings, he sank down upon the ground in a profound sleep, from which a band, with crescented turbans and crooked sword-blades, awoke him. Still persisting to reject the Prophet's faith, he was led forth to die ; but, in passing through the camp, the Soubachis of the Caliph stopped the troop, as he had been commanded, and Demetrius was ushered into the tent, where Abubeker, not yet arisen, lay stretched on his sofa. For a while the captive remained resolute, preferring death to the disgrace of turning a renegado ; but the wily Caliph, who had taken a deep and sudden interest in the fortunes of the youth, knew well the spring, by the touch of which his heart was most likely to be affected. He pointed out to

Demetrius prospects of preferment and grandeur, while he assured him that, in a few days, Damascus must to a certainty surrender, in which case his mistress must fall into the power of a fierce soldiery, and be left to a fate full of dishonour, and worse than death itself; but, if he assumed the turban, he pledged his royal word that especial care should be taken that no harm should alight on her he loved.

Demetrius paused, and Abubeker saw that the heart of his captive was touched. He drew pictures of power, and affluence, and domestic love, that dazzled the imagination of his hearer; and while the prisoner thought of his Isabelle, instead of rejecting the impious proposal, as at first he had done, with disdain and horror, his soul bent like iron in the breath of the furnace flame, and he wavered and became irresolute. The keen eye of the Caliph saw the working of his spirit within him, and allowed him yet another day to form his resolution. When the second day was expired, Demetrius craved a third; and on the fourth morning, miserable man, he abjured the faith of his fathers, and became a Mussulman.

Abubeker loved the youth, assigning him a post of dignity, and all the mighty host honoured him whom the Caliph delighted to honour. He was clad in rich attire, and magnificently attended, and, to all eyes, Demetrius seemed a person worthy of envy; yet, in the calm of thought, his conscience upbraided him, and he was far less happy than he seemed to be.

Ere yet the glow of novelty had entirely ceased to bewilder the understanding of the renegade, preparations were made for the assault, and after a fierce but ineffectual resistance, under their gallant leaders Thomas and Herbis, the Damascenes were obliged to submit to their imperious conqueror, on condition of being allowed, within three days, to leave the city unmolested.

When the gates were opened, Demetrius, with a heart overflowing with love and delight, was among the first to enter. He inquired of every one he met of the fate of Isabelle; but all turned from him with disgust. At length he found her out, but what was his grief and surprise—in

a nunnery ! Firm to the troth she had so solemnly plighted, she had rejected the proposition of her mercenary parent ; and, having no idea but that her lover had shared the fate of all Christian captives, she had shut herself up from the world, and vowed to live the life of a vestal.

The surprise, the anguish, the horror of Isabelle, when she beheld Demetrius in his Moslem habiliments, cannot be described. Her first impulse, on finding him yet alive, was to have fallen into his arms ; but, instantly collecting herself, she shrunk back from him with loathing, as a mean and paltry dastard. "No, no," she cried, "you are no longer the man I loved ; our vows of fidelity were pledged over the Bible ; that book you have renounced as a fable ; and he who has proved himself false to Heaven, can never be true to me !"

Demetrius was conscience-struck ; too late he felt his crime, and foresaw its consequences. The very object for whom he had dared to make the tremendous sacrifice had deserted him, and his own soul told him with how much justice ; so, without uttering a syllable, he turned away, heart-broken, from the holy and beautiful being whose affections he had forfeited for ever.

When the patriots left Damascus, Isabelle accompanied them. Retiring to Antioch, she lived with the sisterhood for many years ; and, as her time was passed between acts of charity and devotion, her bier was watered with many a tear, and the hands of the grateful duly strewed her grave with flowers. To Demetrius was destined a briefer career. All-conscious of his miserable degradation, loathing himself, and life, and mankind, he rushed back from the city into the Mahomedan camp ; and entering, with a hurried step, the tent of the Caliph, he tore the turban from his brow, and cried aloud—"Oh, Abubeker ! behold a God-forsaken wretch. Think not it was the fear of death that led me to abjure my religion—the religion of my fathers—the only true faith. No ; it was the idol of Love that stood between my heart and heaven, darkening the latter with its shadow ; and had I remained as true to God as I did to the Maiden of my love, I had not needed this." So saying, and ere the hand of Abubeker could arrest him, he drew a poniard

from his embroidered vest, and the heart-blood of the renegade spouted on the royal robes of the successor of Mahomet.

So grandly had James spouted this bloody story, that notwithstanding my sleepiness, his words whiled dirled through my marrow like quicksilver, and set all my flesh a grueing. In the middle of it, he was himself so worked up, that twice he pulled his Kilmarnock from his head, silk-napkin, bandage and all, and threw them down with a thump on the table, which once wellnigh capsize the candlestick.

The porter and the stabbing, also, very nearly put me beside myself; and I felt so queerish and eerie when I took my hat to wish him a good-night—knowing that baith Nanse and Benjie would be neither to hold nor bind, it being now half-past ten o'clock—that, had it not been for the shame of the thing, and that I remembered being one of the King's gallant volunteers, I fear I would have asked James for the lend of his lantern, to show me down the dark close.

The reader will thus perceive that the adventure of the killing-coat, stuck alike in the measurement and in the making by Tammie Bodkin, was destined, in the great current of human events, to form a prominent feature, not only in my own history, but in that of worthy James Batter. To me it might be considered as a passing breeze—having been accustomed to see and suffer a vast deal; but my friend, I fear much, will bear marks of it to his grave. Yet I cannot blame myself with a safe conscience for James having fallen the victim to Cursecowl. I had tried every thing to solder up matters which the heart of man could suggest; and knowing that it was a catastrophe which would bring down open war and rebellion throughout the whole parish, my thoughts were all of peace, and how to stave off the eruption of the bloody heathen. I had thought over the thing seriously in my bed; and reckoning plainly that Cursecowl was not one likely soon to hold out a flag of truce, I had come to the determination within myself to sound a parley—and offer either to take back the coat, or refund part of the purchase-money. I may add, that having an unbounded regard for his judgment and

discretion, I had, in my own mind, selected James Batter to be sent as the ambassador. The same day, however, brought round the extraordinary purchase of the Willie-goat's head, and gave a new and unexpected turn to the whole business.

Folk, moreover, should never be so over-proud as not to confess when they are in fault; and from what happened, I am free to admit, that James, harmless as a sucking dove, was no match in such a matter for the like of Cursecowl, who was a perfect incarnation, for devilry and cunning, of the old Serpent himself.

My intentions, however, were good, and those of a Christian; for had Cursecowl accepted the ten shillings by way of blood-money, which it was thus my intention to have offered, this fearful and bloody stramash would have been hushed up without the world having become a whit the wiser. But "there is many a slip," as the proverb says, "between the cup and the lip;" and the best intentions often fall to the ground, like the beggarman between the two stools.

The final conclusion of the whole tragedy was, as it behoves me to mention, that Cursecowl, in consideration of a month's gratis work in the slaughter-house, made a brotherly legacy of the coat to his nephew, young Killim. The laddie was a perfect world's wonder every Sunday, and would have been laughed at out of his seven senses, had he not at last rebelled and fairly thrown it off. I make every allowance for the young man; and am sorry to confess that it was indeed a perfect shame to be seen. At Dalkeith, where one is well known, any thing may pass; but I was always in bodily terror, that, had he gone to Edinburgh, he would have been taken up by the police, on suspicion of being either a Spanish pawtriot or a highway robber.

CHAPTER XXV.

A PHILISTINE IN THE COAL-HOLE.

" They steeked doors, they steeked yetts,
Close to the cheek and chin ;
They steeked them a' but a wee wicket,
And Lammikin crap in."—*Ballad of the Lammikin.*

" Hame cam our gudeman at een,
And hame cam he ;
And there he spied a man
Where a man shouldna be.
Hoo cam this man, kimmer,
And who can it be ;
Hoo cam this carle here,
Without the leave o' me ?"—*Old Song.*

Years wore on after the departure and death of poor Mungo Glen, during the which I had a sowd of prentices, good, bad, and indifferent, and who afterwards cut, and are cutting, a variety of figures in the world. Sometimes I had two or three at a time ; for the increase of business that flowed in upon me with a full stream was tremendous, enabling me—who say it that should not say it—to lay by a wheen bawbees for a sore head, or the frailties of old age. Somehow or other, the clothes made on my shopboard came into great vogue through all Dalkeith, both for neatness of shape and nicety of workmanship ; and the young journeymen of other masters did not think themselves perfected, or worthy a decent wage, till they had crooked their houghs for three months in my service. With regard to myself, some of my acquaintances told me, that if I had gone into Edinburgh to push my fortune, I could have cut half the trade out of bread, and maybe risen, in the course of nature, to be Lord Provost himself ; but I just heard them speak, and kept my wheisht. I never was overly ambitious ; and I remembered how proud Nebuchadnaazer ended with eating grass on all-fours. Every man has a right to be the best judge of his own private matters ; though, to be sure, the advice of a true friend is often more precious than rubies, and sweeter than the Balm of Gilead.

It was about the month of March, in the year of grace *anno Domini* eighteen hundred, that the whole country

trembled, like a giant ill of the ague, under the consternation of Buonaparte, and all the French vagabonds emigrating over, and landing in the Firth. Keep us all ! the folk, do it bodies, put less confidence than became them in what our volunteer regiments were able and willing to do ; yet we had a remnant among us of the true blood, that with loud laughter laughed the creatures to scorn ; and I, for one, kept up my pluck, like a true Highlander. Does any living soul believe that Scotland—the land of the Tweed, and the Clyde, and the Tay—could be conquered, and the like of us sold, like Egyptian slaves, into captivity ? Fie, fie—I despise such haivers. Are we not descended, father and son, from Robert Bruce and Sir William Wallace, having the bright blood of freemen in our veins, and the Pentland Hills, as well as our own dear homes and firesides to fight for ? The rascal that would not give cut-and-thrust for his country as long as he had a breath to draw, or a leg to stand on, should be tied neck and heels, without benefit of clergy, and thrown over Leith pier, to swim for his life like a mangy dog !

Hard doubtless it is—and I freely confess it—to be called by sound of bugle, or tuck of drum, from the counter and the shopboard—men, that have been born and bred to peaceful callings, to mount the red-jacket, soap the hair, buckle on the buff-belt, load with ball-cartridge, and screw bayonets ; but it's no use talking. We were ever the free British ; and before we would say to Frenchmen that we were their humble servants, we would either twist the very noses off their faces, or perish in the glorious struggle.

It was aye the opinion of the Political folk, the Whigs, the Black-nebs, the Radicals, the Papists, and the Friends of the People, together with the rest of the clan-jamphrey, that it was a done battle, and that Buonaparte would lick us back and side. All this was in the heart and heat of the great war, when we were struggling, like drowning men, for our very life and existence, and when our colours—the true British flag—were nailed to the mast-head. One would have thought these rips were a set of prophets, they were all so busy prophesying, and never anything good. They kent (believe them) that we were to be smote hip and thigh ; and that to oppose the vile Corsican was like men with strait-

jackets out of Bedlam. They could see nothing brewing around them but death, and disaster, and desolation, and pillage, and national bankruptcy—our brave Highlanders, with their heads shot off, lying on the bloody field of battle, all slaughtered to a man; our sailors, handcuffed and shackled, musing in a French prison on the bypast days of Camperdown, and of Lord Rodney breaking through the line; with all their fleets sunk to the bottom of the salt sea, after being raked fore and aft with chain-shot; and our timber, sugar, tea, and treacle merchants, all fleeing for safety and succour down to lodgings in the Abbey Strand, with a yellow stocking on the ae leg and a black one on the other, like a wheen mountebanks. Little could they foresee, with their spentacles of prophecy, that a battle of Waterloo would ever be fought, to make the confounded fugies draw in their horns, and steek up their scraighing gabs for ever. Poor fushionless creatures!

I do not pretend to be a politician,—having been bred to the tailoring line syne ever I was a callant, and not seeing the Advertteezer Newspapers, or the Edinburgh Evening Courant, save and except at an orra time,—so I shall say no more, nor pretend to be one of the thousand-and-one wise men, able and willing to direct his Majesty's Ministers on all matters of importance regarding Church or State. One thing, howsoever, I trust I ken, and that is, my duty to my King as his loyal subject, to old Scotland as her unworthy son, and to my family as their prop, support, and breadwinner;—so I shall stick to all three (under Heaven) as long as I have a drop of blood in my precious veins. But the truth is—and I will let it out and shame the de'il—that I could not help making these general observations (as Maister Wiggie calls the spiritualeezing of his discourses), as what I have to relate might well make my principles suspected, were they not known to all the world to be as firm as the foundations of the Bass Rock. Ye shall nevertheless judge for yourselves.

It was sometime in the blasty month of March, the weather being rawish and rainy, with sharp frosty nights that left all the window-soles whitewashed over with frost rind in the mornings, that as I was going out in the dark, before lying down in my bed, to give a look into the hen-

house, and lock the coal-cellar, so that I might hang the bit key on the nail behind our room window-shutter, I happened to give a keek in, and, lo and behold! the awful apparition of a man with a yellow jacket, lying sound asleep on a great lump of parrot-coal in a corner!

In the first hurry of my terror and surprise at seeing a man with a yellow jacket and a green foraging-cap in such a situation, I was like to drop the good twopenny candle, and faint clean away; but, coming to myself in a jiffie, I determined, in case it might be a highway robber, to thraw about the key, and, running up for the firelock, shoot him through the head instantly, if found necessary. In turning round the key, the lock, being in want of a feather of oil, made a noise, and wakened the poor wretch, who, jumping to the soles of his feet in despair, cried out in a voice that was like to break my heart, though I could not make out one word of his paraphernally. It minded me, by all the world, of a wheen cats fuffing and fighting through ither, and whiles something that sounded like "Sugar, sugar, measure the cord," and "dabble dabble." It was worse than the most outrageous Gaelic ever spoken in the height of passion by a Hieland shearer.

"Oho!" thinks I, "friend, ye cannot be a Christian from your lingo, that's one thing poz; and I would wager tippence you're a Frenchy. Who kens, keep us all, but ye may be Buonaparte himself in disguise, come over in a flat-bottomed boat to spy the nakedness of the land. So ye may just rest content, and keep your quarters good till the morn's morning."

It was a wonderful business, and enough to happen to a man in the course of his lifetime, to find Mounseer from Paris in his coal-neuk, and have the enemy of his country snug under lock and key; so, while he kept rampaung, fuffing, stamping, and *diabbling* away, I went in and brought out Benjie, with a blanket rowed round him, and my journeyman, Tommy Staytape—who, being an orphan, I made a kind of parlour-boarder of, he sleeping on a shake-down beyond the kitchen fire—to hold a consultation and be witness of the transaction.

I got my musket, and Tommy Staytape armed himself with the goose—a deadly weapon, whoever may get a clour

with it—and Benjie took the poker in one hand, and the tongs in the other; and out we all marched briskly, to make the Frenchman, that was locked up from the light of day in the coal-house, surrender. After hearkening at the door for a while, and finding all quiet, we gave a knock to rouse him up, and see if we could bring anything out of him by speering cross-questions. Tommy and Benjie trembled from top to toe, like aspen leaves, but fient a word could we make common-sense of at all. I wonder who educates these foreign creatures? It was in vain to follow him, for he just gab-gabbed away, like one of the stone-masons at the Tower of Babel. At first I was completely bamboozled, and almost dung stupid, though I kent one word of French which I wanted to put to him—so I cried through, “Canna ye speak Scotcha, Mounseer?”

He had not the politeness to stop and make answer, but just went on with his string of haivers, without either rhyme or reason, which we could make neither top, tail, nor main of.

It was a sore trial to us all, putting us to our wits’ end, and how to come on was past all visible comprehension; when Tommy Staytape, giving his elbow a rub, said, “Od, maister, I wager something that’s he broken loose frae Penicuik. We have him like a rotten in a fa’.”

On Penicuik being mentioned, we heard the foreign creature in the coal-house groaning out, “och,” and “ochone,” and “parbleu,” and “Mysie Rabble,”—that I fancy was his sweetheart at home, some bit French quean, that wondered he was never like to come from the wars and marry her. I thought on this, for his voice was mournful, though I could not understand the words; and kenning he was a stranger in a far land, my bowels yearned within me with compassion towards him.

I would have given half-a-crown at that blessed moment to have been able to wash my hands free of him; but I swithered, and was like the cuddie between the two bundles of hay. At long and last a thought struck me, which was to give the deluded simple creature a chance of escape; reckoning that, if he found his way home, he would see the shame and folly of fighting against us any more, and, marrying Mysie Rabble, live a contented and peaceful life,

under his own fig and bay tree. So wishing him a sound sleep, I cried through the door, "Mounseer, gooda nighta," decoying away Benjie and Tommy Staytape into the house. Bidding them depart to their beds, I said to them after shutting the door, "Now, callants, we have the precious life of a fellow-creature in our hand, and to account for. Though he has a yellow jacket on, and speaks nonsense, yet, nevertheless, he is of the same flesh and blood as ourselves. Maybe we may be all obliged to wear green foraging-caps before we die yet ! Mention what we have seen or heard to no living soul ; for maybe, if he were to escape, we would be all taken up on suspicion of being spies, and hanged on a gallows as high as Haman." After giving them this wholesome advice, I despatched them to their beds like lamplighters, binding them to never fash their thumbs, but sleep like tops, as I would keep a sharp look-out till morning.

As soon, howsoever, as I heard them sleeping, and playing on the pipes through their noses, I cried first "Tommy," and syne "Benjie," to be sure ; and, glad to receive no answer from either, I went to the aumrie and took out a mutton-bone, gey sair pyked, but fleshy enough at the mouse end ; and, putting a penny row beside it, crap out to the coal-house on my tiptaes. All was quiet as pussie,—so I shot them through the hole at the corner made for letting the gaislings in by ; and giving a tirl, cried softly through, "Halloa, Mounseer, there's your suppera fora youa ; for I dara saya you are yauppa."

The poor chiel commenced again to grunt and grane, and groan and yelp, and cry ochone, and make such woful lamentations, that heart of man could not stand it ; and I found the warm tears prap-prapping to my een. Before being put to this trial of my strength, I thought that, if ever it was my fortune to foregather with a Frenchman, either him or me should do or die ; but, i'fegs, one should not crack so crouse before they are put to the test ; and, though I had taken a prisoner without fighting at all—though he had come into the coal-hole of the Philistines of his own accord, as it were, and was as safe as the spy in the house of Rahab at Jericho—and though we had him like a mouse beneath a firlet, snug under custody of lock and key, yet I

considered within myself, with a pitiful consideration, that, although he could not speak well, he might yet feel deeply ; that he might have a father and mother, and sisters and brothers, in his ain country, weeping and wearying for his return ; and that his true love Mysie Rabble might pine away like a snapped flower, and die of a broken heart.

Being a volunteer, and so one of his Majesty's confidential servants, I swithered tremendously between my duty as a man and a soldier ; but, do what you like, nature will aye be uppermost. The scale weighed down to the side of pity. I hearkened to the Scripture that promises a blessing to the merciful in heart, and determined, come of it what would, to let the Frenchy take his chance of falling into other hands.

Having given him a due allowance by looking at my watch, and thinking he would have had enough of time to have taken his will of the mutton-bone in the way of pyking, I went to the press and brought out a bottle of swipes, which I also shoved through the hole ; although, for lack of a tanker, there being none at hand, he would be obliged to lift it to his head, and do his best. To show the creature did not want sense, he shoved, when he was done, the empty plate and the toom bottle through beneath the door, mumbling some trash or other which no living creature could comprehend, but which, I dare say, from the way it was said, was the telling me how much he was obliged for his supper and poor lodging. From my kindness towards him, he grew more composed ; but as he went back to the corner to lie down, I heard him give two-three heavy sighs. I could not thole't, mortal foe though the man was of mine ; so I gave the key a canny thraw round in the lock, as it were by chance, and wishing him a good-night, went to my bed beside Nanse.

At the dawn of day, by cock-crow, Benjie and Tommy Staytape, keen of the ploy, were up and astir, as anxious as if their life depended on it, to see that all was safe and snug, and that the prisoner had not shot the lock. They agreed to march sentry over him half an hour the piece, time about, the one stretching himself out on a stool beside the kitchen fire, by way of a bench in the guard-house, while the other went to and fro like the ticker of a clock. I dare-

say they saw themselves marching him after breakfast-time, with his yellow jacket, through a mob of weans with glowering een and gaping mouths, up to the Tolbooth.

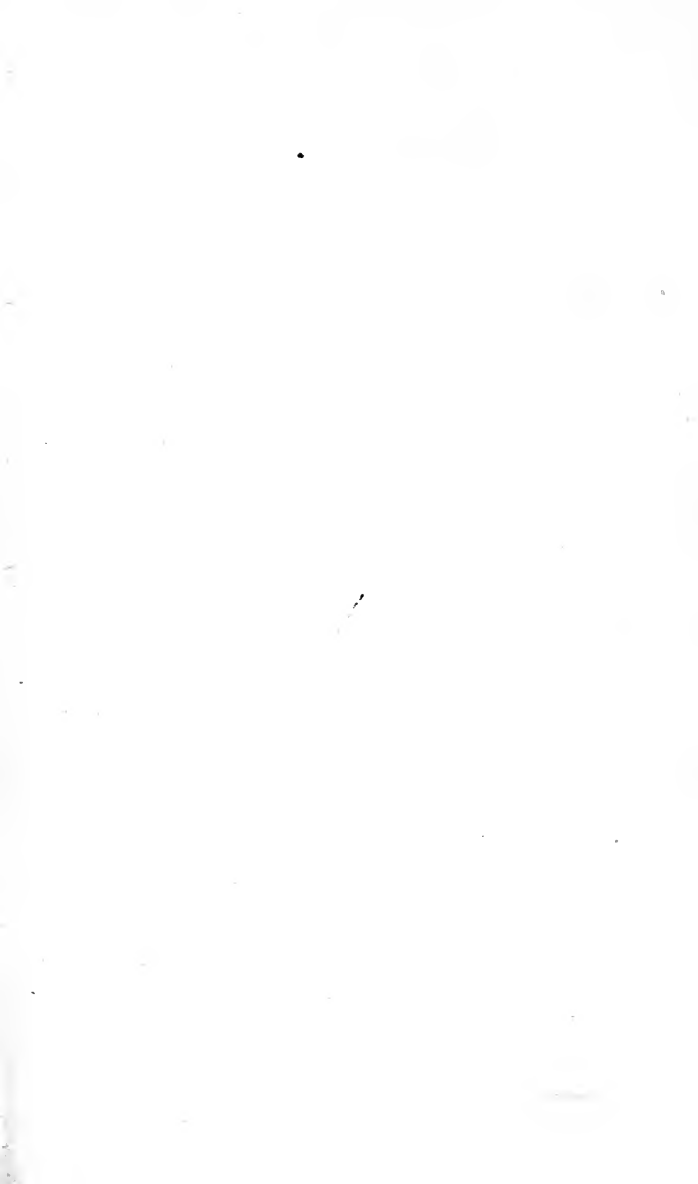
The back-window being up a jink, I heard the two confabbing, "We'll draw cuts," said Benjie, "which is to walk sentry first; see, here's two straws, the longest gets the choice." "I've won," cried Tommy; "so gang you in a while, and if I need ye, or grow frightened, I'll beat leather-ti-patch wi' my buckles on the back-door. But we had better see first what he is about, for he may be howking a hole through aneath the foundations; thae fiefs can work like moudiwarts." "I'll slip forret," said Benjie, "and gie a peep." "Keep to a side," cried Tommy Staytape, "for, dog on it, Moosey'll maybe hae a pistol; and if his birse be up, he would think nae mair o' shooting ye as dead as a red herring, than I would do of taking my breakfast."

"I'll rin past, and gie a knock at the door wi' the poker to rouse him up?" asked Benjie.

"Come away then," answered Tommy, "and ye'll hear him gie a yowl, and commence gabbling like a goose."

As all this was going on, I rose and took a vizzy between the chinks of the window-shutters; so, just as I got my neb to the hole, I saw Benjie, as he flew past, give the door a drive. His consternation, on finding it flee half open, may be easier imagined than described; especially, as on the door dunting to again, it being soople in the hinges, they both plainly heard a fistling within. Neither of them ever got such a fleg since they were born; for, expecting the Frenchman to bounce out like a roaring lion, they hurried like mad into the house, coupling the creels over one another, Tommy spraining his thumb against the back-door, and Benjie's foot going into Tommy's coat-pocket, which it carried away with it, like a cloth-sandal.

At the noise of this stramash, I took opportunity to come fleeing down the stair, with the gun in my hand; in the first place, to show them I was not frightened to handle fire-arms; and, in the second, making pretence that I thought it was Mounseer with his green foraging-cap making an attempt at housebreaking. Benjie was in a terrible pickle; and though his nose was bleeding with the drive he had come against Tommy's teeth, he took hold of my





George Cruikshank

Mansie with the Sun

arm like grim death, crying, "Take tent, faither, take tent; the door is open, and the Penicuiker hiding himself behind it. He'll brain some of us with a lump of coal—and will he!"

I jealoused at once that this was nonsense; judging that, by all means of rationality, the creature would be off and away like lightning to the sea-shore, and over to France in some honest man's fishing-boat, down by at Fisherrow; but, to throw stoure in the een of the two callants, I loaded with a wheen draps in their presence, and warily priming the pan, went forward with the piece at full-cock.

Tommy and Benjie came behind me, while, pushing the door wide open with the muzzle, as I held my finger at the trigger, I cried, "Stand or be shot;" when young Curse-cowl's big ugly mastiff-dog, with the bare mutton bone in its teeth, bolted through between my legs like a fury, and with such a force as to heel me over on the braid of my back, while I went a dunt on the causey that made the gun go off, and riddled Nanse's best washing-tub in a manner that laid it on the superannuated list as to the matter of holding in water. The goose that was sitting on her eggs, among clean straw in the inside of it, was also rendered a lameter for life.

What became of the French vagrant was never seen or heard tell of from that day to this. Maybe he was caught, and, tied neck and heels, hurried back to Penicuik as fast as he left it; or maybe—as one of the Fisherrow oyster-boats was amissing next morning—he succeeded in giving our brave fleets the slip, and rowing night and day against wind and tide, got home in a safe skin: but this is all matter of surmise—nobody kens.

On making search in the coal-house at our leisure afterwards, we found a boxful of things with black dots on them, some with one, some with two, and four, and six, and so on, for playing at an outlandish game they call the dominoes. It was the handiwork of the poor French creature, that had no other Christian employment but making these and such-like, out of sheep-shanks and marrow-bones. I never liked gambling all my life, it being contrary to the Ten Commandments; and mind of putting on the back of the fire the old pack of cards, with the Jack of Trumps among them, that the deboshed journeymen tailors, in the shop with me in the

Grassmarket, used to play birkie with when the maister's back was turned. This is the first time I have acknowledged the transaction to a living soul: had they found me out at the time, my life would not have been worth a pinch of snuff. But as to the dominoes, considering that the Frenchy must have left them as a token of gratitude, and as the only payment in his power for a bit comfortable supper, it behoved me—for so I thought—not to turn the wrong side of my face altogether on his present, as that would be unmannerly towards a poor stranger.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding all these reasons, the dominoes, after everything that can be said of good anent them, were a black sight, and for months and months produced a scene of riot and idleness after working hours, that went far to render our housie, that was before a picture of decorum and decency, a tabernacle of confusion, and a hell upon earth. Whenever time for stopping work came about, down we regularly all sat, night after night, the wife, Benjie, Tommy Staytape, and myself, playing for a ha'penny the game, and growing as anxious, fierce, and keen about it, as if we had been earning the bread of life. After two or three months' trial, I saw that it would never do, for all subordination was fast coming to an end in our bit house, and, for lack of looking after, a great number of small accounts for clouting elbows, piecing waistcoats, and mending leggins, remained unpaid; a great number of wauf customers crowding about us, by way of giving us their change, but with no intention of ever paying a single fraction. The wife, that used to keep everything bien and snug, behaving herself like the sober mother of a family, began to funk on being taken through hands, and grew obstrapulous with her tongue. Instead of following my directions—who was his born maister in the cutting and shaping line—Tommy Staytape pretended to set up a judgment of his own, and disfigured some ploughmen's jackets in a manner most hideous to behold; while, to crown all, even Absalom, the very callant Benjie, my only bairn, had the impudence to contradict me more than once, and began to think himself as clever as his father. Save us all! it was a terrible business, but I determined, come what would, to give it the finishing stitch.

Every night being worse than another, I did not wait long for an opportunity of letting the whole of them ken my mind, and that, whenever I chose, I could make them wheel to the right about. So it chanced, as we were playing, that I was in prime luck, first rooking the one and syne the other, and I saw them twisting and screwing their mouths about as if they were chewing bitter aloes. Finding that they were on the point of being beaten roop and stoop, they all three rose up from the chairs, crying with one voice, that I was a cheat. An elder of Maister Wiggie's kirk to be called a cheat! Most awful!!! Flesh and blood could not stand it, more especially when I thought on who had dared to presume to call me such; so, in a whirlwind of fury, I swept up two nievefuls of dominoes off the table, and made them flee into the bleezing fire, where, after fizzing and cracking like a wheen squeebs, the whole tot, except about half-a-dozen which fell into the porritch-pot, which was on boiling at the time, were reduced to a heap of grey aizles. I soon showed them who was the top of the tree, and what they were likely to make of undutiful rebellion.

So much for a Mounseer's legacy: being in a kind of doubt whether, according to the Riot Act and the Articles of War, I had a clear conscience in letting him away, I could not expect that any favour granted at his hands was likely to prosper. In fighting, it is well kent to themselves and all the world, that they have no earthly chance with us; so they are reduced to the necessity of doing what they can, by coming to our firesides in sheep's clothing, and throwing ram-pushion among the family broth. They had better take care that they do not get their fingers scaddled.

Having given the dominoes their due, and washed my hands free of gambling I trust for evermore, I turned myself to a better business, which was the going, leaf by leaf, back through our bit day-book, where I found a tremendous sowd of wee outstanding debts. I daresay, not to tell a lee, there were fifty of them, from a shilling to eighteenpence, and so on; but small and small, reckoned up by simple addition, amount to a round sum; while, to add to the misery of the matter, I found we were entangling ourselves to work to a wheen ugly customers, skemps that had not

wherewithal to pay lawful debts, and downright rascals, rag-gamuffins, and ne'er-do-weels. According to the articles of indenture drawn up between me and Tommy Staytape, by Rory Sneckdrawer the penny-writer, when he was bound a prentice to me for seven years, I had engaged myself to bring him up to be a man of business. Though now a journeyman, I reckoned the obligation still binding; so, tying up two dockets of accounts with a piece of twine, I gave one parcel to Tommy, and the other to Benjie, telling them, by way of encouragement, that I would give them a penny the pound for what silver they could bring me in by hook or crook.

After three days' toil and trouble, wherein they mostly wore their shoon off their feet, going first up one close and syne down another, up trap-stairs to garrets and ben long trances that led into dirty holes—what think ye did they collect? Not one bodle—not one coin of copper! This one was out of work;—and that one had his house-rent to pay;—and a third one had an income in his nose;—and a fourth was bedridden with rheumatics;—and a fifth one's mother's auntie's cousin was dead;—and a sixth one's good-brother's nevoy was going to be married come Martymas;—and a seventh one was away to the back of beyond to see his granny in the Hielands;—and so on. It was a terrible business, but what wool can ye get by clipping swine?

The only rational answers I got were two: one of them, Geggie Trotter, a natural simpleton, told Tommy Staytape, "that, for part-payment, he would give me a prime leg of mutton, as he had killed his sow last week." And what, said I to Benjie, did Jacob Truff the gravedigger tell ye by way of news? "He just bad me tell ye, faither, that hoo could ye expect he cou'd gie ye onything till the times grew better; as he hadna buried a living soul in the kirkyard for mair nor a fortnight."

CHAPTER XXVI.

BENJIE ON THE CARPET.

“ It’s no in titles, nor in rank—
It’s no in wealth, like Lon’on bank,
To purchase peace and rest ;
It’s no in making muckle *mair*,
It’s no in books—it’s no in lear,
To make us truly blest.”—BURNS.

It is a most wonderful thing to the eye of a philosopher, to make observation how youth gets up, notwithstanding all the dunts and tumbles of infancy—to say nothing of the spaining-brash and the teeth-cutting ; and to behold the visible changes that the course of a few years produces. Keep us all ! it seemed but yesterday to me, when Benjie, a wee bit smout of a wean, with long linty locks and docked petticoats, toddled but and ben, with a coral gum-stick tied round his waist with a bit knitten ; and now, after he had been at Dominie Threshem’s for four years, he had learned to read Barrie’s Collection almost as well as the master could do for his lugs ; and was up to all manner of accounts, from simple addition and the multiplication-table, even to vulgar fractions, and all the lave of them.

At the yearly examination of the schoolroom by the Presbytery and Maister Wiggie, he aye sat at the head of the form, and never failed getting a clap on the head and a wheen carvies. They that are fathers will not wonder that this made me as proud as a peacock ; but when they asked his name, and found whose son he was, then the matter seemed to cease being a business of wonder, as nobody could suppose that an only bairn, born to me in lawful wedlock, could be a dult. Folk’s cleverness—at least I should think so—lies in their pows ; and, that allowed, Benjie’s was a gey droll one, being of the most remarkable sort of a shape ye ever saw ; but, what is more to the purpose both here and hereafter, he was a real good-hearted callant, though as gleg as a hawk and as sharp as a needle. Everybody that had the smallest gumption prophesied that he would be a real clever one ; nor could we grudge that we took pains in his

rearing—he having been like a sucking-turkey, or a hot-house plant from far away, delicate in the constitution—when we saw that the debt was likely to be paid with bank-interest, and that, by his uncommon cleverality, the callant was to be a credit to our family.

Many and long were the debates between his fond mother and me, what trade we would breed him up to—for the matter now became serious, Benjie being in his thirteenth year; and, though a wee bowed in the near leg, from a suppleness about his knee-joint, nevertheless as active as a hatter, and fit for any calling whatsoever under the sun. One thing I had determined in my own mind, and that was, that he should never with my will go abroad. The gentry are no doubt philosophers enough to bring up their bairns like sheep to the slaughter, and despatch them as cadies to Bengal and the Cape of Good Hope, as soon as they are grown up; when, lo and behold! the first news they hear of them is in a letter, sealed with black wax, telling how they died of the liver complaint, and were buried by six blacks two hours after.

That was one thing settled and sealed, so no more need be said about it; yet, notwithstanding of Nanse's being satisfied that the spaewife was a deceitful gipsy, perfectly untrustworthy, she would aye have a finger in the pie, and try to persuade me in a coaxing way. "I'm sure," she would say, "ane with half an e'e may see that our son Benjie has just the physog of an admiral. It's a great shame contradicting nature."

"Po, po," answered I, "woman, ye dinna ken what ye're saying. Do ye imagine that, if he were made a sea-admiral, we could ever live to have any comfort in the son of our bosom? Would he not, think ye, be obliged with his ship to sail the salt seas, through foul weather and fair; and, when he met the French, to fight, hack, and hew them down, lith and limb, with grape-shot and cutlass; till some unfortunate day or other, after having lost a leg and an arm in the service, he is felled as dead as a door-nail, with a cut and thrust over the crown, by some furious rascal that saw he was off his guard, glowering with his blind e'e another way?—Ye speak havers, Nanse; what are all the honours of this world worth? No worth this pinch of snuff I have

between my finger and thumb—no worth a bodle, if we never saw our Benjie again, but he was aye ranging and rampaung far abroad, shedding human blood; and when we could only aye dream about him in our sleep, as one that was wandering night and day blindfold, down the long, dark, lampless avenue of destruction, and destined never more to visit Dalkeith again, except with a wooden stump and a brass virl, or to have his head blown off his shoulders, mast high, like ingan peelings, with some exploding earthquake of combustible gunpowder.—Call in the laddie, I say, and see what he would like to be himsell.”

Nanse ran but the house, and straightway brought Benjie, who was playing at the bools, ben by the lug and horn. I had got a glass, so my spirit was up. “Stand there,” I said; “Benjie, look me in the face, and tell me what trade ye would like to be.”

“Trade?” answered Benjie; “I would like to be a gentleman.”

Dog on it, it was more than I could thole, and I saw that his mother had spoiled him; so, though I aye liked to give him wholesome reproof rather than lift my fist, I broke through this rule in a couple of hurries, and gave him such a jerk in the cheek with the loof of my hand, as made, I am sure, his lug ring, and sent him dozing to the door like a peerie.

“Ye see that,” said I, as the laddie went ben the house whingeing; “ye see what a kettle of fish ye have made o’t?”

“Weel, weel,” answered Nanse, a wee startled by my strong decisive way of managing, “ye ken best, and, I fancy, maun tak’ the matter your ain way. But ye can have no earthly objection to making him a lawer’s advocatt?”

“I would see him hanged first,” answered I. “What! do you imagine I would set a son of mine to be a sherry-offisher, ganging about rampaung through the country, taking up fiefs and robbers, and suspicious characters with wauf looks and waur claes; exposed to all manner of evil communication from bad company, in the way of business; and rousing out puir creatures that cannot find wherewithal to pay their lawful debts, at the Cross, by warrant of the Sherry, with an auld chair in ae hand and an eevery hammer in the ither? Siccan a sight wad be the death o’ me.”

"What think ye then of the preaching line?" asked Nanse.

"The preaching line!" quo' I—"No, no, that'll never do. Not that I want respect for ministers, who are the servants of the Most High; but the truth is, that unless ye have great friends and patronage of the like of the Duke down by, or the Marquis of Lothian up by, or suchlike, ye may preach yoursell as hoarse as a corbie, from June to January, before ony body will say, 'Hae, puir man, there's a kirk.' And if no kirk casts up—which is more nor likely—what can a young probationer turn his hand to? He has learned no trade, so he can neither work nor want. He daurna dig nor delve, even though he were able, or he would be hauled by the cuff of the neck before his betters in the General Assembly, for having the impudence to go for to be so bold as dishonour the cloth; and though he may get his bit orra half-a-guinea whiles, for holding forth in some bit country kirk, to a wheen shepherds and their dogs, when the minister himself, staring with the fat of good living and little work, is lying ill of a bile fever, or has the gout in his muckle toe, yet he has aye the miseries of uncertainty to encounter; his coat grows bare in the cuffs, greasy in the neck, and brown between the shouthers; his jawbones get long and lank, his een sunk, and his head grey wi' vexation, and what the wise Solomon calls 'hope deferred;' so at long and last, friendless and penniless, he takes the incurable complaint of a broken heart, and is buried out of the gate, in some bit strange corner of the kirkyard."

"Stop, stop, gudeman," cried Nanse, half greeting, "that's an awfu' business; but I daresay it's owre true. But mightna we breed him a doctor? It seems they have unco profits; and, as he's sae clever, he might come to be a graduat."

"Doctor!" answered I—"Keh, keh, let that flee stick to the wa'; it's a' ye ken about it. If ye was only aware of what doctors had to do and see, between dwining weans and crying wives, ye would have thought twice before ye let that out. How do ye think our callant has a heart within him to look at folk bluiding like sheep, or to sew up cutted throats with a silver needle and silk thread, as I would

stitch a pair of trousers ; or to trepan out pieces of cloured skulls, filling up the hole with an iron plate ; and pull teeth, maybe the only ones left, out of auld women's heads, and so on, to say nothing of rampaung with dark lanterns and double-tweel dreadnoughts, about gousty kirkyards, among humlock and long nettles, the haill night over, like spunkie—shoving the dead corpses, winding-sheets and all, into corn-sacks, and boiling their bones, after they have dissected all the red flesh off them, into a big caudron, to get out the marrow to make drogs of ?

“Eh, stop, stop, Mansie !” cried Nanse, holding up her hands.

“Na,” continued I, “but it's a true bill—it's as true as ye are sitting there. And do ye think that any earthly compensation, either gowpins of gowd by way of fees, or yellow chariots to ride in, with a black servant sticking up behind, like a sign over a tobacconist's door, can ever make up for the loss of a man's having all his feelings seared to iron, and his soul made into whinstone, yea, into the nether-millstone, by being art and part in sic dark and devilish abominations ? Go away wi' siccan downright nonsense. Harken to my words, Nanse, my dear. The happiest man is he that can live quietly and soberly on the earnings of his industry, pays his day and way, works not only to win the bread of life for his wife and weans, but because he kens that idle-set is sinful ; keeps a pure heart towards God and man ; and, caring not for the fashion of this world, departs from it in the hope of going, through the merits of his Redeemer, to a better.”

“Ye are right, after a',” said Nanse, giving me a pat on the shouther ; and finding who was her master as well as spouse—“Ill wad it become me to gang for to gie advice to my betters. Tak' your will of the business, gudeman ; and if ye dinna mak' him an admiral, just mak' him what ye like.”

Now is the time, thought I to myself, to carry my point, finding the drappikie I had taken with Donald M'Naughton, in settling his account for the green jacket, still working in my noddle, and giving me a power of words equal to Mr Blouster, the Cameronian preacher,—now is the time, for I still saw the unleavened pride of womankind

wambling within her, like a serpent that has got a knock on the pow, and been cast down but not destroyed; so, taking a hearty snuff out of my box, and drawing it up first one nostril, then another, syne dighting my finger and thumb on my breek-knees, "What think ye," said I, "of a sweep? Were it not for getting their faces blacked like savages, a sweep is not such a bad trade after a'; though, to be sure, going down lums six stories high, head-foremost, and landing upon the soles of their feet upon the hearthstone, like a kittlin, is no just so pleasant." Ye observe, it was only to throw cold water on the unthrifty flame of a mother's pride that I said this, and to pull down uppishness from its heathenish temple in the heart, head-foremost. So I looked to her, to hear how she would come on.

"Haivers, haivers," said Nanse, birsing up like a cat before a colley. "Sweep, say ye? I would sooner send him up wi' Lunardi to the man i' the moon; or see him banished, shackled neck and heels, to Botany Bay."

"A weel, a weel," answered I, "what notion have ye of the packman line? We could fill his box with needles, and prins, and tape, and hanks of worsted, and penny thimbles, at a small expense; and, putting a stick in his hand, send him abroad into the wide world to push his fortune."

The wife looked dumfounded. Howsoever — "Or breed him a rowley-powley man," continued I, "to trail about the country frequenting fairs; and dozing thro' the streets selling penny cakes to weans, out of a basket slung round the neck with a leather strap; and parliaments, and quality, brown and white, and snaps well peppered, and gingerbread nits, and so on. The trade is no a bad ane, if creatures would only learn to be careful."

"Mansie Wauch, Mansie Wauch, ha'e ye gane out o' yere wuts?" cried Nanse—"are ye really serious?"

I saw what I was about, so went on without pretending to mind her. "Or what say ye to a penny-pie-man? I'fegs, it's a cozy berth, and ane that gars the cappers birl down. What's the expense of a bit daigh, half an ounce weight, pirled round wi' the knuckles into a case, and filled half full o' salt and water, wi' twa or three nips o' braxy floating about in't? Just naething ava;—and consider on a winter night, when iceshockles are hinging from the tiles, and

stomachs relish what is warm and tasty, what a sale they can get, if they go about jingling their little bell, and keep the genuine article! Then ye ken in the afternoon, he can show that he has two strings to his bow, and have a wheen cookies, either new baked for ladies' tea-parties, or the yesterday's auld shopkeepers' het up i' the oven again—which is all to ae purpose."

"Are ye really in your seven natural senses—or can I believe my ain een? I could almost believe some warlock had thrown glamour into them," said Nanse, staring me broad in the face.

"Take a good look, gudewife, for seeing's believing," quo' I; and then continued, without drawing breath or bridle, at full birr—

"Or if the baking line does not please ye, what say ye to binding him regularly to a man-cook? There he'll see life in all its variorums. Losh keep us a', what an insight into the secrets of roasting, brandering, frying, boiling, baking, and brewing—nicking of geese's craigs—hacking the necks of dead chickens, and cutting out the tongues of leeving turkeys! Then what a steaming o' fat soup in the nostrils; and siccan a collection o' fine smells, as would persuade a man that he could fill his stomach through his nose! No weather can reach such cattle: it may be a storm of snow twenty feet deep, or an even-down pour of rain, washing the very cats off the house tops; when a weaver is shivering at his loom, with not a drop of blood at his finger nails, and a tailor like myself, so numb with cauld, that instead of driving the needle through the claith, he brogs it through his ain thumb—then, fient a hair care they; but, standing beside a ranting, roaring, parrot-coal fire, in a white apron and a gingham jacket, they pour sauce out of ae pan into anither, to suit the taste of my Lord this, and my Lady that, turning, by their legerdemain, fish into fowl, and fowl into flesh; till, in the long-run, man, woman, and wean, a' chew and champ away, without kenning more what they are eating than ye ken the day ye'll dee, or whether the Witch of Endor wore a demity falderal or a manco petticoat."

"Weel," cried Nanse, half rising to go ben the house, "I'll sit nae langer to hear ye gabbling nonsense like a magpie.

Mak' Benjie what ye like ; but ye'll mak' me greet the een out o' my head."

"Hooly and fairly," said I ; "Nanse, sit still like a woman, and hear me out." So, giving her a pat on the shouther, she sat her ways down, and I resumed my discourse.

"Ye've heard, gudewife, from Benjie's own mouth, that he has made up his mind to follow out the trade of a gentleman ; —who has put such outrageous notions in his head I'm sure I'll not pretend to guess at. Having never myself been above daily bread, and constant work—when I could get it—I dare not presume to speak from experience ; but this I can say, from having some acquaintances in the line, that, of all easy lives, commend me to that of a gentleman's gentleman. It's true he's caa'd a flunky, which does not sound quite the thing ; but what of that ? what's in a name ? pugh ! it does not signify a bawbee—no, nor that pinch of snuff : for, if we descend to particulars, we're all flunkies together, except his Majesty on the throne.—Then William Pitt is his flunky—and half the house of Commons are his flunkies, doing what he bids them, right or wrong, and no daring to disobey orders, not for the hair in their heads—then the Earl waits on my Lord Duke—Sir Something waits on my Lord Somebody—and his tenant, Mr So-and-so, waits on him—and Mr So-and-so has his butler—and the butler has his flunky—and the shoeblack brushes the flunky's jacket—and so on. We all hang at one another's tails like a rope of ingans—so ye observe, that any such objection in the sight of a philosopher like our Benjie would not weigh a straw's weight.

"Then consider for a moment—just consider, gudewife—what company a flunky is every day taken up with, standing behind the chairs, and helping to clean plates and porter ; and the manners he cannot help learning, if he is in the smallest gleg in the uptake, so that, when out of livery, it is the toss up of a halfpenny whether ye find out the difference between the man and the master. He learns, in fact, everything. He learns French—he learns dancing in all its branches—he learns how to give boots the finishing polish—he learns how to play at cards, as if he had been born and bred an Earl—he learns, from pouring the bottles, the name of every wine brewed abroad—he learns how to

brush a coat, so that, after six months' tear and wear, one without spectacles would imagine it had only gotten the finishing stitch on the Saturday night before ; and he learns to play on the flute, and the spinnet, and the piano, and the fiddle, and the bagpipes ; and to sing all manner of songs, and to skirl, full gallop, with such a pith and birr, that though he was to lose his precious eyesight with the small-pox, or a flash of forked lightning, or fall down a three-storey stair dead drunk, smash his legs to such a degree that both of them required to be cut off, above the knees, half an hour after, so far all right and well—for he could just tear off his shoulder-knot, and make a perfect fortune—in the one case, in being led from door to door by a ragged laddie, with a string at the button-hole, playing 'Ower the Border,' 'The Hen's March,' 'Donald M'Donald,' 'Jenny Nettles,' and suchlike grand tunes, on the clarinet ; or, in the other case, being drawn from town to town, and from door to door on a hurdle, like a lord, harnessed to four dogs of all colours, at the rate of two miles in the hour, exclusive of stoppages.—What say ye, gudewife ?”

Nanse gave a mournful look, as if she was frightened I had grown demented, and only said, “Tak' your ain way, gude-man ; ye'se get your ain way for me, I fancy.”

Seeing her in this Christian state of resignation, I determined at once to hit the nail on the head, and put an end to the whole business as I intended. “Now, Nanse,” quo' I, “to come to close quarters with ye, tell me candidly and seriously what ye think of a barber ? Every one must allow it's a canny and cozy trade.”

“A barber that shaves beards !” said Nanse. “'Od, Mansie, ye're surely gaun gyte. Ye're surely joking me all the time ?”

“Joking !” answered I, smoothing down my chin, which was gey an' rough. “Joking here or joking there, I should not think the settling of an only bairn in an honourable way of doing for all the days of his natural life is any joking business. Ye dinna ken what ye're saying, woman. Barbers ! i'fegs, to turn up your nose at barbers ! did ever living hear such nonsense ! But to be sure, one can blame nobody if they speak to the best of their experience. I've heard tell of barbers, woman, about London, that rode up

this street, and down that other street, in coaches and four, jumping out to every one that hallooed to them, sharpening razors both on stone and strap, at the ransom of a penny the pair ; and shaving off men's beards, whiskers and all, stoop and roop, for a three-ha'pence. Speak of barbers ! it's all ye ken about it. Commend me to a safe employment, and a profitable. They may give others a nick, and draw blood, but catch them hurting themselves. They are not exposed to colds and rheumatics, from east winds and rainy weather ; for they sit, in white aprons, plaiting hair into wigs for auld folks that have bell-pows, or making false curls for ladies that would fain like to look smart in the course of nature. And then they go from house to house, like gentlemen in the morning ; cracking with Maister this or Madam that, as they soap their chins with scented-soap, or put their hair up in marching order either for kirk or playhouse. Then at their leisure, when they're not thrang at home, they can pare corns to the gentry, or give ploughmen's heads the bicker-cut for a penny, and the hair into the bargain for stuffing chairs with ; and between us, who knows—many rottener ship has come to land—but that some genty Miss, fond of plays, poems, and novels, may fancy our Benjie when he is giving her red hair a twist with the torturing irons, and run away with him, almost whether he will or not, in a stound of unbearable love ! ”

Here making an end of my discourse, and halting to draw breath, I looked Nanse broad in the face, as much as to say, “Contradict me if ye daur,” and, “What think ye of that now !”—The man is not worth his lugs that allows his wife to be maister ; and being by all laws, divine and human, the head of the house, I aye made a rule of keeping my putt good. To be candid, howsoever, I must take leave to confess that Nanse, being a reasonable woman, gave me but few opportunities of exerting my authority in this way. As in other matters, she soon came, on reflection, to see the propriety of what I had been saying and setting forth. Besides, she had such a motherly affection towards our bit callant, that sending him abroad would have been the death of her.

To be sure, since these days—which, alas, and woe's me ! are not yesterday now, as my grey hair and wrinkled brow

but too visibly remind me—such ups and downs have taken place in the commercial world, that the barber line has been clipped of its profits and shaved close, from a patriotic competition among its members, like all the rest. Among other things, hair-powder, which was used from the sweep on the lum-head to the king on the throne, is only now in fashion with the Lords of Session and valy-deshambles; and pig-tails have been cut off from the face of the earth, root and branch. Nevertheless, as I have taken occasion to make observation, the foundations of the cutting and shaving line are as sure as that of the everlasting rocks; beards being likely to roughen, and heads to require polling, as long as wood grows and water runs.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“PUGGIE, PUGGIE”—A STORY WITHOUT A TAIL.

“Saw ye Johnnie coming? quo’ she,
Saw ye Johnnie coming?
Wi’ his blue bonnet on his head,
And his doggie running?”—*Old Ballad.*

The welfare of the human race and the improvement of society being my chief aim in this record of my sayings and doings through the pilgrimage of life, I make bold at the instigation of Nanse, my worthy wife, to record in black and white a remarkably curious thing, to which I was an eyewitness in the course of nature. I have little reluctance to consent, not only because the affair was not a little striking in itself—as the reader will soon see—but because, like Æsop’s Fables, it bears a good moral at the end of it.

Many a time have I thought of the business alluded to, which happened to take place in our fore-shop one bonny summer afternoon, when I was selling a coalier wife, from the Marquis of Lothian’s upper hill, a yard of serge at our counter-side. At the time she came in, although busied in reading an account of one of Buonaparte’s battles in the ‘Courant’ newspaper, I observed at her foot a bonny wee

doggie, with a bushy black tail, of the dancing breed—that could sit on its hind-legs like a squirrel, cast biscuit from its nose, and play a thousand other most diverting tricks. Well, as I was saying, I saw the woman had a pride in the bit creature—it was just a curiosity like—and had belonged to a neighbour's son that volunteered out of the Berwickshire militia (the Birses, as they were called) into a regiment that was draughted away into Egypt, Malta, or the East Indies, I believe—so, it seems, the lad's father and mother thought much more about it, for the sake of him that was off and away—being to their fond eyes a remembrancer, and to their parental hearts a sort of living keepsake.

After bargaining about the serge—and taking two or three other things, such as a leather-cap edged with rabbit-fur for her little nevoy—a dozen of plaited buttons for her good-man's new waistcoat, which was making up at Bonnyrig by Nicky Sharpshears, my old apprentice—and a spotted silk napkin for her own Sunday neck wear—I tied up the soft articles with grey paper and skinie, and was handing over the odd bawbees of change, when, just as she was lifting the leather-cap from the counter, she said with a terrible face, looking down to the ground as if she was short-sighted—“Pity me! what's that?”

I could not imagine, gleg as I generally am, what had happened; so came round about the far end of the counter, with my spectacles on, to see what it was, when, lo and behold! I perceived a dribbling of blood all along the clean sanded floor, up and down, as if somebody had been walking about with a cut finger; but, after looking around us for a little, we soon found out the thief—and that we did.

The bit doggie was sitting cowering and shivering, and pressing its back against the counter, giving every now and then a mournful whine, so we plainly saw that everything was not right. On the which, the wife, slipping a little back, snapped her finger and thumb before its nose, and cried out—“Hiskie, poor fellow!” but no—it would not do. She then tried it by its own name, and bade it rise, saying, “Puggie, Puggie!” when—would ever mortal man of woman born believe it?—its bit black, bushy, curly tail

was off by the rump—docked and away, as if it had been for a wager.

“Eh, megstie !” cried the woman, laying down the leather-cap and the tied-up parcel, and holding out both her hands in astonishment. “Eh, my goodness, what’s come o’ the brute’s tail? Lovy ding! just see, it’s clean gane! Losh keep me! that’s awfu’! Div ye keep rotten-fa’s about your premises, Maister Wauch? See a bonny business as ever happened in the days of ane’s lifetime !”

As a furnishing tailor, as a Christian, and as an inhabitant of Dalkeith, my corruption was raised—was up like a flash of lightning, or a cat’s back. Such doings in an enlightened age and a civilised country!—in a town where we have three kirks, a grammar school, a subscription library, a ladies’ benevolent society, a mechanics’ institution, and a debating club! My heart burned within me like dry tow, and I could mostly have jumped up to the ceiling with vexation and anger—seeing as plain as a pikestaff, though the simple woman did not, that it was the handiwork of none other than our neighbour Reuben Cursecowl, the butcher. Dog on it, it was too bad—it was a rascally transaction; so, come of it what would, I could not find it in my heart to screen him. “I’ll wager, however,” said I, in a kind of off-hand way, not wishing exactly, ye observe, to be seen in the business, “that it will have been running away with beef-steaks, mutton-chops, sheep-feet, or something else out of the booth; and some of his prentice laddies may have come across its hind-quarters accidentally with the cleaver.”

“Mistake here, or mistake there,” said the woman, her face growing as red as the sleeve of a soldier’s jacket, and her two eyes burning like live coals—“’Od the butcher, but I’ll butcher him, the nasty, ugly, ill-faured vagabond; the thief-like, cruel, malicious, ill-hearted, down-looking black-guard! He would go for to offer for to presume for to dare to lay hands on an honest man’s son’s doug! It sets him weel, the bloodthirsty Gehazi, the halinshaker ne’er-do-weel! I’ll gie him sic a redding up as he never had since the day his mother boor him!” Then looting down to the poor bit beast, that was bleeding like a sheep—“Ay, Puggie, man,” she said in a doleful voice, “they’ve made ye an unco fright;

but I'll gie them up their fit for't : I'll show them in a couple of hurries that they have catched a Tartar !” and with that out went the woman, paper-parcel, leather-cap and all, randying like a tinkler from Yetholm ; the wee wretchie cowering behind her, with the mouse-wabs sticking on the place I had put them to stop the bleeding, and looking, by all the world, like a sight I once saw when I was a boy, on a visit to my father's half-cousin, Aunt Heatherwig, on the Castle-hill of Edinburgh—to wit, a thief going down Leith Walk, on his road to be shipped for transportation to Botany Bay, after having been pelted for a couple of hours with rotten eggs in the pillory.

Knowing the nature of the parties concerned, and that intimately on both sides, I jealoused directly that there would be a stramash ; so not liking, for sundry reasons, to have my neb seen in the business, I shut to the door and drew the long bolt ; while I hastened ben to the room, and softly pulling up a jink of the window, clapped the side of my head to it, that, unobserved, I might have an opportunity of overhearing the conversation between Reuben Cursecowl and the coallier wife—which, weel-a-wat, was likely to become public property.

“Hollo ! you man, do ye ken onything about that ?” cried the randy woman ;—but wait a moment, till I give a skiff of description of our neighbour Reuben.

By this time—it was ten years after James Batter's tragedy—Mr Cursecowl was an oldish man—he is gathered to his fathers now—and was considerably past his best, as his wife, douce honest woman, used to observe. His dress was a little in the Pagan style, and rendered him kenspeckle to the eye of observation. Instead of a hat, he generally wore a long red Kilmarnock nightcap, with a cherry on the top of it, through foul weather and fair ; and having a kind of trot in his walk, from a bink forward in his knees, it dangdangled behind him, like the cap of Mr Merryman with the painted face, the show-folks' fool. On the afternoon alluded to he was in full killing-dress, having on an auld blue short coatie, once long, but now docked in the tails, so that the pocket-flaps and the hainch-buttons were not above three inches from the place where his wife had snibbed it across by ; and, from long use in his bloodthirsty occupation, his

sleeves flashed in the daylight as if they had been double japanned. Tied round his beer-barrel-like waist was a stripped apron, blue and white; and at his left side hung a bloody gaping leather pouch, as if he had been an Israelite returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, filled with steels and knives, straight and crooked, that had done ample execution in their day, I'll warrant them. Up his thighs were rolled his coarse rig-and-fur stockings, as if it were to gird him for the battle, and his feet were slipped into a pair of bauchles—that is, the under part of old boots cut from the legs. As to his face, lo and behold! the moon shining in the nor-west—yea, the sun blazing in all his glory—had not a more crimson aspect than Reuben. Like the pig-eyed Chinese folk on tea-cups, his peepers were diminutive and twinkling; but his nose made up for them—and that it did—being portly in all its dimensions, broad and long, and as to colour, liker a radish than any other production in nature. In short, he was as bonny a figure as ever man of woman born clapped eye on; and was cleaving away, most devoutly, at a side of black-faced mutton, when the woman, as I said before, cried out, “Hollo! you man, do ye ken onything about that?” pointing to the dumb animal that crawled and crouched behind her.

“Aweel, what o’t?” cried Cursecowl, still hacking and cleaving away at the meat.

“What o’t? i’ faith, billy, that’s a gude ane,” answered the wife. “But ye’ll no get aff that way; catch me, my man. My name’s no Jenny Mathieson an I haena ye afore your betters. I’ll learn ye what soommenses are.”

Looking at her with a look of lightning for a couple of seconds—“Aff wi’ ye, gin you’re wise,” quo’ Cursecowl, still cleaving away, “or I’ll maybe bring ye in for the sheep’s head it was trying to make off with in its teeth. Do ye understand that?” And he gave a girn, that stretched his mouth from ear to ear.

This was too much for the subterranean daughter of Eve; it was like putting a red-hot poker among the coals of her own pit. “Oh, ye incarnate cannibal!” she bawled out, doubling her nieve, and shaking it in Reuben’s face; “if ye have a conscience at a’, think black-burning shame o’ yoursell! Just look, ye bluidy salvage; just take a look there, my

bonny man, o' your handiwork now. Isn't that very pretty?" "Aff wi' ye," continued Cursecowl, still cleaving away with the chopping-axe, and muttering a volley of curses through the knife, which he held between his teeth—"Aff wi' ye, and keep a calm sough."

"The dog's no mine, or I wadna have cared sae muckle. Siccan a like beast! Siccan a fright to be seen!!! I'faith I think shame to tak' it hame again!! Ay, man, ye're a pretty fellow! Ye've run fast when the noses were dealing; ye're a bonny man to hack off a poor dumb animal's tail. If it had been a Christian like yoursell, it wad have mattered less—but a puir bit dumb, harmless animal!"

"Aff wi' ye there, and nane o' your chatter," thundered Reuben, stopping in his cleaving, and turning the side of his red face round to the woman. "Flee—vanish—and be cursed to ye—baith you and your doug thegither, ye infernal limmer! It's weel for't, luckie, it was not its head instead of its tail. Ye had better steik your gab—cut your stick—and pack off, gin ye be wise."

"Think shame—think shame—think black-burning shame o' yoursell, ye born and bred ruffian!" roared out the wife at the top story of her voice—shaking her doubled nieve before him—stamping her heels on the causey—then, drawing herself up, and holding her hands on her hainches—"Just look, I tell ye, you unhangd blackguard, at your precious handiwork! Just look, what think ye of that, now? Tak' another look now, ower that fief-like fiery nose o' yours, ye regardless Pagan!"

Flesh and blood could stand this no longer; and I saw Cursecowl's anger boiling up within him, as in a red-hot fiery furnace.

"Wait a wee, my woman," muttered Cursecowl to himself, as, swearing between his teeth, he hurried into the killing-booth.

Furious as the woman however was, she had yet enough of common-sense remaining within her to dread skaith; so, apprehending the bursting storm, she had just taken to her heels when out he came, rampaging after her like a Greenland bear, with a large liver in each hand;—the one of which, after describing a circle round his head, flashed after her like lightning, and hearted her between the shoulders

like a clap of thunder ; while the other, as he was repeating the volley, slipping sideways from his fingers while he was driving it with all his force, played drive directly through the window where I was standing, and gave me such a jerk on the side of the head, that it could be compared to nothing else but the lines written on the stucco image of Shakspeare, the great play-actor, on our parlour chimney-piece—

“ The great globe itself,
Yea, all that it inherits, shall dissolve ;

and I lay speechless on the floor for goodness knows the length of time. Even when I came to my recollection, it was partly to a sense of torment ; for Nanse, coming into the room, and not knowing the cause of my disastrous overthrow, attributed it all to a fit of the apoplexy, and, in her frenzy of affliction, had blistered all my nose with her Sunday scent-bottle of aromatic vinegar.

For some weeks after there was a bumming in my ears, as if all the bee-skeps on the banks of the Esk had been pent up within my head ; and though Reuben Cursecowl paid, like a gentleman, for the four panes he had broken, he drove into me, I can assure him, in a most forcible and striking manner, the truth of the old proverb—which is the moral of this chapter—that “ listeners seldom hear anything to their own advantage.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SERIOUS MUSINGS.

“ My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirr'd,
For the same sound is in mine ears,
Which in those days I heard.
Thus fares it still in our decay ;
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away,
Than what it leaves behind.”—WORDSWORTH.

After consultation with friends, and much serious consideration on such a momentous subject, it having been finally settled on between the wife and myself to educate

Benjie to the barber and haircutting line, we looked round about us in the world for a suitable master to whom we might intrust our dear laddie, he having now finished his education, and reached his fourteenth year.

It was visible in a twinkling to us both, that his apprenticeship could not be gone through with at home in that first-rate style which would enable him to reach the top of the tree in his profession; yet it gave us a sore heart to think of sending away, at so tender an age, one who was so dear to his mother and me, and whom we had, as it were, in a manner made a pet of: so we reckoned it best to article him for a twelvemonth with Ebenezer Packwood at the corner, before finally sending him off to Edinburgh, to get his finishing in the wig, false-curl, and hair-baking department, under Urquhart, Maclachlan, or Connal. Accordingly, I sent for Eben to come and eat an egg with me—matters were entered upon and arranged—Benjie was sent on trial; and though at first he funk'd and fought refractory, he came, to the astonishment of his master and the old apprentice, in less than no time to cut hair without many visible shear-marks; and, within the first quarter, succeeded, without so much as drawing blood, to unbristle, for a wager of his master's, the Saturday night's countenance of Daniel Shoebrush himself, who was as rough as a badger.

Having thus done for Benjie, it now behoved me to have an eye towards myself; for having turned the corner of manhood, I found that I was beginning to be wearing away down the hillside of life. Customers, who had as much faith in me as almost in their Bible with regard to everything connected with my own department, and who could depend on their cloth being cut according to the newest and most approved fashions, began now and then to return a coat upon my hand for alteration, as being quite out of date; while my daily work, to which in the days of other years I had got up blithe as the lark, instead of being a pleasure, came to be looked forward to with trouble and anxiety, weighing on my heart as a care, and on my shoulders as a burden.

Finding but too severely that such was the case, and that there is no contending with the course of nature, I took sweet counsel together with James Batter over a cup of tea

and a cookie, concerning what it was best for a man placed in my circumstances to betake myself to.

As industry ever has its own reward, let me without brag or boasting be allowed to state that, in my own case, it did not disappoint my exertions. I had sat down a tenant, and I was now not only the landlord of my own house and shop, but of all the back tenements to the head of the garden, as also of the row of one-storey houses behind, facing to the loan, in the centre of which Lucky Thamson keeps up the sign of the Tankard and Tappit Hen. It was also a relief to my mind, as the head of my family, that we had cut Benjie loose from his mother's apron-string, poor fellow, and set him adrift in an honest way of doing to buffet the stormy ocean of life; so, everything considered, it was found that enough and to spare had been laid past by Nanse and me to spend the evening of our days by the lound dykeside of domestic comfort.

In Tammie Bodkin, to whom I trust I had been a dutiful, as I know I was an honoured master, I found a faithful journeyman, he having served me in that capacity for nine years; so it is not miraculous, being constantly, during that period, under my attentive eye, that he was now quite a deacon in all the departments of the business. As an eident scholar he had his reward; for customers, especially during the latter years, when my sight was scarcely so good, came at length to be not very scrupulous as to whether their cloth was cut by the man or his master. Never let filial piety be overlooked. When I first patronised Tammie, and promoted him to the dignity of sitting crosslegged along with me on the working-board, he was a hatless and shoeless ragamuffin, the orphan lad of a widowed mother, whose husband had been killed by a chain-shot, which carried off his head, at the bloody battle of the Nile, under Lord Nelson. Tammie was the oldest of four, and the other three were lasses, that knew not in the morning where the day's providing was to come from, except by trust in Him who sent the ravens to Elijah. By allowing Tammie a trifle for board-wages, I was enabled to add my mite to the comforts of the family; for he was kind, frugal, and dutiful, and would willingly share with them to the last morsel. In the course of a few years he became his mother's bread-winner, the lasses being sent

to service—I myself having recommended one of them to Deacon Burlings, and another to Springheel the dancing-master; retaining Katie, the youngest, for ourselves, to manage the kitchen and go messages when required.

Providence having thus blessed Tammie's efforts in the paths of industrious sobriety, what could I do better—James Batter being exactly of the same opinion—than make him my successor; giving him the shop at a cheap rent, the stock-in-trade at a moderate valuation, and the goodwill of the business as a gratis gift.

Having recommended Tammie to public patronage and support, he is now, as all the world knows, a thriving man; nor, from Berwick Bridge to Johnny Groat's, is it in the power of any gentleman to have his coat cut in a more fashionable way, or on more moderate terms, than at the sign of the Goose and the Pair of Shears rampant.

• Leaving Tammie to take care of his own matters, as he is well able to do, allow me to observe, that it is curious how habit becomes a second nature, and how the breaking in upon the ways we have been long and long accustomed to, through the days of the years that are past, is as the cutting asunder of the joints and marrow. This I found bitterly, even though I had the prospect before me of spending my old age in peace and plenty. I could not think of leaving my auld house—every room, every nook in it, was familiar to my heart. The garden trees seemed to wave their branches sorrowfully over my head, as bidding me a farewell; and when I saw all the scraighing hens caught out of the hen-house I had twenty years before built and tiled with my own hands, and tumbled into a sack, to be carried on limping Jock Dalgleish's back up to our new abode at Lugton, my heart swelled to my mouth, and the mist of gushing tears bedimmed my eyesight. Four of Thomas Burlings' flour carts stood laden before the door with our furniture, on the top of which were three of Nanse's grand geraniums in flower-pots, with five of my walking-sticks tied together with a string; and as I paced through the empty rooms, where I had passed so many pleasant and happy hours, the sound of my feet on the bare floor seemed in my ears like an echo from the grave. On our road to Lugton I could scarcely muster common-sense to answer a

person who wished us a good-day ; and Nanse, as we daunted on arm-in-arm, never once took her napkin from her een. Oh, but it was a weary business !

Being in this sober frame of mind, allow me to wind up this chapter—the last catastrophe of my eventful life that I mean at present to make public—with a few serious reflections ; as it fears me that, in much of what I have set down, ill-natured people may see a good deal scarcely consistent with my character for douceness and circumspection ; but if many wonderfuls have befallen to my share, it would be well to remember that a man's lot is not of his own making.

Musing within myself on the chances and changes of time, the uncertainties of life, the frail thread by which we are tacked to this world, and how the place that now knows us shall soon know us no more, I could not help, for two or three days previous to my quitting my dear old house and shop, taking my stick into my hand, and wandering about all my old haunts and houffs — and need I mention that among these were the road down to the Duke's south gate with the deers on it, the waterside by Woodburn, the Cowbrigg, up the back street, through the flesh-market, and over to the auld kirk in among the headstones ? For three walks, on three different days, I set out in different directions ; yet, strange to say ! I aye landed in the kirkyard :—and where is the man of woman born proud enough to brag that it shall not be his fate to land there at last ?

Headstones and headstones around me ! some newly put up, and others mossy and grey ; it was a humbling yet an edifying sight, preaching, as forcibly as ever Maister Wiggie did in his best days, of the vanity and the passingness of all human enjoyments. Mouldered to dust beneath the turfs lay the blithe laddies with whom I have a hundred times played merry games on moonlight nights : some were soon cut off ; others grew up to their full estate ; and there stood I, a greyhaired man, among the weeds and nettles, mourning over times never to return !

The reader will no doubt be anxious to hear a few words regarding my son Benjie, who has turned out just as his friends and the world expected. After his time with Ebenezer Packwood in Dalkeith, he served for four years in

Edinburgh, where he cut a distinguished figure, having shaved and shorn lots of the nobility and gentry—among whom was a French Duchess, and many other foreigners of distinction. In short, nothing went down at the principal hotels but the expertness of Mr Benjamin Wauch ; and, had he been so disposed, he could have commenced on his own footing with every chance of success ; but knowing himself fully young, and being anxious to see more of the world before settling, he took out a passage in one of the Leith smacks, and set sail for London, where he arrived, after a safe and prosperous voyage, without a hair of his head injured. The only thing that I am ashamed to let out about him is, that he is now, and has been for some time past, principal shopman in a Wallflower Hair-powder and Genuine Macassar-oil Warehouse, kept by three Frenchmen, called Moosies Peroukey.

But though our natural enemies, he writes me that he has found them agreeable and chatty masters, full of good manners and pleasant discourse, first-rate in their articles, and, except in their language, almost Christians.

I aye thought Benjie was a genius ; and he is beginning to show himself his father's son, being in thoughts of taking out a patent for making hair-oil from rancid butter. If he succeeds it will make the callant's fortune. But he must not marry Madamoselle Peroukey without my especial consent, as Nanse says that her having a Frenchwoman for her daughter-in-law would be the death of her.

CONCLUSION.

“ He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man, and bird, and beast—
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”—COLERIDGE.

On first commencing this memoir of my life, I put pen to paper with the laudable view of handing down to posterity—to our children, and to their children's children—the

accidents, adventures, and mischances that may fall to the lot of a man placed by Providence even in the loundest situation of life, where he seemed to lie sheltered in the bield of peace and privacy; and at that time it was my intention to have carried down my various transactions to this dividual day and date. My materials, however, have swelled on my hand like summer corn under sunny showers: one thing has brought another to remembrance; sowds of bypast marvels have come before my mind's eye in the silent watches of the night, concerning the days when I sat working crosslegged on the board; and if I do not stop at this critical juncture—to wit, my retiring from trade, and the settlement of my dear and only son Benjie in an honourable way of doing; as who dares to deny that the barber and haircutting line is a safe and honourable employment?—I do not know when I might get to the end of my tether, and the interest which every reasonable man must take in the extraordinary adventures of my early years might be grievously marred and broken in upon through the garrulity of old age.

Perhaps I am going a little too far when I say that the whole world cannot fail to be interested in the occurrences of my life; for since its creation, which was not yesterday, I do not believe—and James Batter is exactly of the same mind—that there ever was a subject concerning which the bulk of mankind have not had two opinions. Knowing this to be the case, I would be a great gomeril to expect that I should be the only white swan that ever appeared; and that all parties in church and state, who are for cutting each other's throats on every other great question, should be unanimous only in what regards me. Englishmen, for instance, will say that I am a bad speller, and that my language is kittle; and such of the Irishers as can read will be threaping that I have abused their precious country; but, my certie, instead of blaming me for letting out what I could not deny, they must just learn to behave themselves better when they come to see us, or bide at home.

Being by nature a Scotsman—being, I say, of the blood of Robert Bruce and Sir William Wallace—and having in my day and generation buckled on my sword to keep the battle from our gates in the hour of danger, ill would it be-

come me to speak but the plain truth, the whole truth, and anything but the truth. No ; although bred to a peaceable occupation, I am the subject of a free king and constitution ; and if I have written as I speak, I have just spoken as I thought. The man of learning, that kens no language saving Greek, and Gaelic, and Hebrew, will doubtless laugh at the curiosity of my dialect ; but I would just recommend him, as he is a philosopher, to consider for a wee that there are other things, in mortal life and in human nature, worth a moment's consideration besides old Pagan heathens—pot-hooks and hangers—the asses' bridge and the weary walls of Troy ; which last city, for all that has been said and sung about it, would be found, I would stake my life upon it, could it be seen at this moment, not worth half a thought when compared with the New Town of Edinburgh. Of all towns in the world, however, Dalkeith for my money. If the ignorant are dumfounded at one of their own kidney—a tailor laddie, that got the feck of his small education leathered into him at Dominie Threshem's school—thinking himself an author, I would just remind them that seeing is believing ; and that they should keep up a good heart, as it is impossible to say what may yet be their own fortune before they die. The rich man's apology I would beg, if, in this humble narrative, in this detail of manners almost hidden from the sphere of his observation, I have in any instance tramped on the tender toes of good breeding, or given just offence in breadth of expression or vulgarity of language. Let this, however, be my apology, that the only value of my wonderful history consists in its being as true as death—a circumstance which it could have slender pretensions to, had I coined stories, or coloured them so as to please my own fancy and that of the world. In that case it would have been very easy for me to have made a Sinbad the Sailor's tale out of it—to have shown myself up a man such as the world has never seen except on paper—to have made Cursecowl behave like a gentleman, and the Frenchman from Penicuik crack like a Christian. And to the poor man—him whom the wise Disposer of all events has seen fit to place in a situation similar to that in which I have been placed, ordaining him to earn daily bread by the labour of his hands and the sweat of his brow—if my

adventures shall afford an hour or two's pleasant amusement, when, after working hours, he sits by his bleezing ingle with a bairn on each knee, while his oldest daughter is sewing her seam, and his goodwife with her right foot birls round the spinning-wheel, then my purpose is gained, and more than gained ; for it is my firm belief that no man, who has by head or hand in any way lightened an ounce weight of the load of human misery, can be truly said to have been unprofitable in his day, or disappointed the purpose of his creation. For what more can we do here below ? The God who formed us, breathing into our nostrils the breath of life, is, in His almighty power and wisdom, far removed beyond the sphere of our poor and paltry offices. We are of the clay, and return to the elements from which we are formed. He is a Spirit, without beginning of days or end of years. The extent of our limited exertions reaches no further than our belief in, and our duty towards Him ; which, in my humble opinion, can be best shown by us in our love and charity towards our fellow-creatures—the master-work of His hands.

I would not willingly close this record of my life, without expressing a few words of heartfelt gratitude towards the multitude from whom, in the intercourse of the world, I have experienced good offices ; and towards the few who, in the hour of my trials and adversities, remained with faces towards me steadfast and unalterable, scorning the fickle who scoffed, and the Levite who passed by on the other side. Of old hath it been said, that a true friend is the medicine of life ; and in the day of darkness, when my heart was breaking, and the world with all its concerns seemed shaded in a gloom never to pass away, how deeply have I acknowledged the truth of the maxim ! How shall I repay such kindness ? Alas ! it is out of my power. But all I can do, I do. I think of it on my pillow at the silent hour of midnight ; my heart burns with the gratitude it hath not—may never have an opportunity of showing to the world ; and I put up my prayer in faith to Him who seeth in secret, that He may bless and reward them openly.

Sorrows and pleasures are inseparably mixed up in the cup set for man's drinking, and the sunniest day hath its cloud. But I have made this observation, that if true

happiness, or anything like true happiness, is to be found in this world, it is only to be purchased by the practice of virtue. Things will fall out—so it hath been ordained in this scene of trial—even to the best and purest of heart, which must carry sorrow to the bosom and bring tears to the eyelids; and then to the wayward and the wicked, bitter is their misery as the waters of Marah. But never can the good man be wholly unhappy; he has that within which passeth show; the anchor of his faith is fixed on the Rock of Ages; and when the dark cloud hath glided over—and it will glide—it leaves behind it the blue and unclouded heaven.

If, concerning religious matters, a tone of levity at any time seems to infect these pages, I cry ye mercy, for nothing was further from my intention; yet, though acknowledging this, I maintain that it is a vain thing to look on religion as on a winter night, full of terror, and darkness, and storms. No one, it strikes me, errs more widely than he who supposes that man was made to mourn—that the sanctity of the heart is shown by the length of the face—and that mirth, the pleasant mirth of innocent hearts, is sinful in the sight of Heaven. I will never believe that. The very sun may appear dim to such folks as choose only to look at him through green spectacles; as by the poor wretch who is dwining in the jaundice, the driven snow could be sworn to as a bright yellow. Such opinions, however, lie between man and his Maker, and are not for the like of us to judge of. For myself, I have enjoyed a pleasant run of good health through life, reading my Bible more in hope than fear—our salvation, and not our destruction, being I should suppose its purpose. So when I behold bright suns and blue skies, the trees in blossom, and birds on the wing, the waters singing to the woods, and earth looking like the abode of them who were at first formed but a little lower than the angels, I trust that the overflowing of a grateful heart will not be reckoned against me for unrighteousness.

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[Moir, David Macbeth,]
The life of Mansie Wauch

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